THE CROSS OF CHRIST

THE MEASURE of the WORLD

REV. M. J. GRIFFITH

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MEASURE OF THE WORLD.

BY

REV. M. J. GRIFFITH,

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TO

THE VERY REV. DR. HENRY GABRIELS,

President of St. Joseph's Provincial Seminary,

TROY, N. Y.,

The following work is Dedicated,

AS A TOKEN OF SINCERE AFFECTION AND DEVOTED ADMIRATION,

BY THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

In compliance with a custom, which is not without its advantages, this is the place to lay before the reader some account of the following work, its rise and progress, nature and design. I am not of opinion that the subject can be so easily exhausted as some may suppose. I do not think it possible for the richest imagination to preclude all scope for further remark, on so copious a matter, or for the greatest acuteness to prevent all criticism on its elucidation. On the other hand, it must be owned possible, that a man may write copiously on a subject, without adding to the stock of knowledge provided by those who wrote before him, or saying anything which has not been already as well, or perhaps better, said by others. How far this is applicable to the present publication, must be submitted to the judicious and intelligent reader.

As far back as the year 1868, soon after I had gotten the charge of a country parish, I first formed the design of collecting such useful materials as should either occur to my own observation, or as I should meet with in the course of my reading. In this way I proceeded many years, merely for my own improvement, and that I might qualify myself for being more useful to the people intrusted to my care. I did not assign to this occupation any stated portion of my time, but recurred to it occasionally, when anything occurred in reading,

or offered itself to my reflections, which appeared to throw light on the subject of my investigation.

I may in this work have erred in many things; for to err is the lot of frail humanity; and no merely human production ever was, or ever will be, faultless. But I can say, with confidence, that I have not erred in anything essential. And wherefore am I thus confident? Because I believe the word of the Lord Jesus: "If any man will do the will of God he shall know of the doctrine whether it be from God" (John vii. 17).

In an age like the present, wherein literary productions are so greatly multiplied, it is not matter of wonder that readers, when they hear of any new work, inquire about what, in modern phrase, is called the *originality* of the thoughts, and the beauties of style it possesses. The press teems daily with the labors of the learned. Plenty in this, as in every other commodity, makes people harder to be pleased; hence it happens that authors are sometimes tempted for the sake of gratifying the over-nice and fastidious taste of their readers, to affect paradoxes, and say things extravagant and incredible, being more solicitous about the newness, or even the uncommonness, than about the truth of their sentiments. Though I cannot help thinking this preference injudicious, whatever be the subject, it is highly blamable in every thing wherein religion or morals are concerned. To this humor, therefore, no sacrifice can be expected here. As to the language, simplicity, propriety, and perspicuity are the principal qualities at which I have aimed. I have no other reason to give for adding one more to that heap of books which men complain is already grown too great, but the hope I have of doing some service to our Lord, by

making a search into the *Testimony*, which proves that Jesus Christ is the *Son* of God, and in *Him* we have *Eternal life* (1 John v. 7, 8, 11). The hope of which is the most precious legacy the Son of God has left us; the hinge upon which all religion turns; without which it would be the greatest vanity (as Lactantius often speaks, vi. c. 9) to obey the commands of virtue; for whose sake we must endure not only many labors but oftentimes sore calamities. "We were born (as he discourses elsewhere, Lib. vii. 11, c. 9) to acknowledge God the maker of us and of the world: whom we therefore acknowledge, that we may worship Him; and therefore worship Him, that we may receive immortality for a reward of our labors."

The serious reader, I doubt not, will be sensible of all this, when he has perused the following work. In this book the reader has a verbal illustration of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. We of to-day discover as much to admire in the expanded pages of revelation and creation as did Adam six thousand years ago, when he walked forth to survey the beauties of Eden while arrayed in the glitter of its earliest dews.

To rear the edifice of Christian knowledge on its only secure and solid basis; to afford the faithful a fixed standard of Christian belief, and to supply a pure and perennial fountain of living waters to refresh and invigorate the souls of men, were amongst the important objects contemplated by the author.

The judicious reader will not look for ornaments of style in a work purely theological and didactic; the character of the work precludes the idea: perspicuity and elaborate accuracy are the leading features of the book.

In regard to the Theological illustrations offered, it may be proper to state, that the author entered nearly every quarry within his reach that promised materials suitable to his purpose, and fashioning them after his own plan, inserting them in the edifice rearing under his hands. The Sacred Scriptures are the fountains from which the work must draw, while for the fuller elucidations of Catholic tenets the author has taken for his guide men eminently instrumental in promoting orthodoxy, men who proved themselves the guiding stars to the portals of God's Church.

Truth has been, in all their inquiries, their great aim. To her they were ready to sacrifice every personal consideration, but were determined, not knowingly, to sacrifice her to anything. We love also the truth and must defend it. Now, let us ask what *is* the real key? What is the Christian interpretation of this world? What is given us by revelation to estimate and measure this world by?—the crucifixion of the Son of God.

The doctrine of *The Cross of Christ the measure of the world*, and its adaptation to the wants and wishes of our common humanity, will be found unfolded with a freshness, a fulness, and a power highly calculated to expand the views, enlighten the judgment, and improve the heart. For it gives the principles, as well as the rules, on which our salvation depends. "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 38).

The more we investigate what Jesus Christ has done, the more shall we know of Him, and the more we shall admire what we know, and love what we admire. Great pains have been taken to give, as far as possible, a clear and succinct exposition of the subjects in this treatise,

—nothing was left undone on the part of the author to secure to their pages soundness of Catholic doctrine.

The materials for this work, long contemplated, had been gathered with diligence. I feel it a duty rather than a satisfaction, to say—that on looking over my manuscripts, stretching over a period of nineteen years, I have not found an opinion or a feeling that I have ceased to entertain. Things and persons and circumstances may have changed much, so one can not, and must not feel now as then: but it is a consolation to have still the conviction that one did feel right then, because those feelings were the necessary germs of what we know to be right now. Only principles could stand the test of so many years; and in religious ideas only one principle can remain unchangeable. It is to render homage to this truth that I consider a duty. I have surely a right to prize it above all other advantages, and consider it as a part of that heavenly wisdom which God refuses to none in His Church. And this was the determination to keep strictly under her guidance, to prize her orthodox teaching beyond all seductive theories, all brilliant paradoxes, all palliating explanations; to love Catholic truth, simple and unmodified, as found at its centre, as practiced by artless believers; to look there for purity of doctrine and accuracy of observance, where God has left the richest deposit for the future resurrection, in the ashes of His Apostles.

This unbounded devotion to Christ's one Church, this undeviating adherence to her supreme Ruler has been the chart and compass by which I have endeavored to sail; and while I humbly trust that not a word will be found in this volume discordant with her teaching,

her maxims, her desires, her thoughts, I submit to her correction all that is here written, and beg every obscurity or dubiousness to be interpreted on this principle. With these words of peace, I take leave of my courteous reader, wishing him from above all grace and blessing, as I bid him to implore for me all mercy and forgiveness.

M. J. G.

St. John's Church, Valatie, N. Y.

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All these subjects may be found in Newman (xi) principally in "Parochial + Plain Sermons" v. g. "The Cross &c. p. 138. + see "P + P. Sermons, p. 83, vol VI of Library edition

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THE CROSS OF CHRIST

THE

MEASURE OF THE WORLD.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

THE doctrines of natural and revealed religion: such as the existence of one perfect Being, Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things; the doctrine of the Trinity, or of three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the Incarnation; and the necessity of the Spirit's influence to regenerate the souls of men: This is God's truth, and the substance of all that reason teaches, and the Scriptures have revealed. There is reason for diversity of opinion on other points, but no one who has ears to hear, and who humbly listens to the voices of nature and revelation, can fail to discover what God is, and what man is, and what he needs.

Now, before noticing the positive proof of the existence of God, there is an initial consideration of some importance to the argument which must be adverted to.

We allude to the immense knowledge requisite in certain cases to establish a negative. An individual, for example, cast upon what seemed to be a desert island, might affirm that it was, or lately had been inhabited, and in proof of this, he would need only to point to the human foot-print on the sand. One such mark would of

itself be sufficient to make good the affirmation. But were the companion of his misfortune to contend that the island was uninhabited, and that no traces of a human being having ever been there could be found, it is very obvious that the proof of this negative assertion would be attended with greater difficulty. In the one case, the simple human foot-mark fresh upon the soil, would be proof sufficient. In the other case, it would be necessary to explore the whole region, to examine carefully every cavern and locality before the negative proposition could be substantiated. The one clear print of a man's foot would prove that the man was, or had been, on the island, but it would be requisite to see that no human foot-print was visible throughout its entire length and breadth, that no vestige of a human inhabitant could be discovered, before an individual could be entitled to say, that no man was or had been there. And the difficulty of making good the negative would increase with the enlargement of the country, and the number and size of the localities to be gone over.

The same principle holds with regard to the extent of time as to the extent of space. These remarks will enable us to see what extraordinary attainments must have been made before an individual be entitled to say there is no God. It is a negative proposition which no finite mind can enunciate without being guilty of the most astounding presumption, and the man would only betray his folly who would attempt to demonstrate it. The skeptic may express his doubts of the divine existence, and give reasons for his doubting, but beyond this skepticism can achieve nothing. In order to substantiate the affirmative proposition, that there is a God, nothing more might be necessary than to point to

some of the foot-prints of the Creator which are visible in the heavens and the earth. If there be a God, only a very small amount of knowledge and experience would be required to prove it. The evidence might lie, as we say it does lie, in a flower of the field, in a leaf of the forest, in a single hand, or in a single eye. But the negative proposition could not be substantiated with such compass. He must needs have made himself thoroughly acquainted with all worlds, have searched into the records of all ages, and have found throughout all space and all time no evidence of design, before an individual could be entitled to say that the universe is without a God.

This intelligence, while a God is denied, involves the very attributes of divinity. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. Atheism is thus shown, at the very outset, to be illogical, and to rest on a monstrous assumption.

Man cannot declare that there is no God without being guilty of the most tremendous presumption. He who hazards the assertion is a fool, because it involves an amount of intelligence, while He in whom alone that attribute resides, is denied. And not only so, but there is an intellectual necessity for a Being uncaused and the cause of all. The mind cannot be satisfied without it. It refuses to pass along a dependent series of causes and effects without resting in something that is first and independent. That there must be a first Cause, is a primitive belief, a proposition that lies beyond the pale of demonstration.

The good old way in which men have reasoned from the beginning is upwards from the evidences of a de-

sign to a designer, upwards from the goodly collocations of matter that meet our view, and the mental phenomena that come under our consciousness, to the great Parent source of all orderly relations of matter and mind. And this simple way is the best way. Design proves a designer, but it does not prove that the designer is God. The argument from external and visible nature leads the way, but unaided by other proofs or conceptions, would never conduct us to the *Ego sum qui sum*. The marks of contrivance which are so palpable in everything we see in the fields of creation, give us the logical conclusion that everything has had a contriver. They give us also the idea of great wisdom and goodness and power, but of themselves they do not give us the proof of a Being possessed of infinite and absolute perfections. The argument points, like a finger-post, in that direction, but, strictly speaking, we leave the argument or it leaves us, and we resign ourselves to the necessary conviction that there a Great First Designer, and that he is God.

From effects we ascend naturally to causes; and we are carried by inductive philosophy to the highest point in the series of material causation. Sir Isaac Newton has truly said, "Though every true step in this philosophy brings us not immediately to the knowledge of the First Cause, yet it brings us nearer to it." Let the chain of material causation be lengthened out ever so far, we only feel, however, at the topmost link what is felt throughout all the lower links, the necessity of a cause above all others in nature, a cause uncaused and the cause of all, whose name is God. Finite effects, indeed, can never of themselves give us an infinite cause. The *à posteriori* argument, strictly speaking,

cannot, unaided, carry us up to the throne in heaven, and prove that beyond the circle of natural causes and effects is the great First Cause of all. But it leads us very far onward in that path, and then by a soft and imperceptible step, transfers us to the natural conviction that there is an independent existence who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the First and the Last.

From the great we pass by a different link to the infinite; from transcendent attributes we pass to absolute perfections, and that link is supplied by the mind itself. The transition in most cases is made imperceptibly, but it is done. We have a certain primitive conviction that there is a Being of necessity and unchanging existence, the Maker of all things, and in whom centres, in an infinite degree, every perfection that is found in His works. It is thus that we, apart from Scriptural revelation, rise with a firm step from nature up to nature's God!

The most perfect order of the universe is a demonstration of a God. There is an evidence of God in the field of external nature. Indeed, in man himself we have an embodiment of the whole argument. The human frame is the noblest structure beneath the heavens. In the exquisite mechanism of his body, and in the primitive judgments and wondrous operations of his mind, we have the clearest indications of the Creator that lie within the range of natural theology. If you want argument from design, then you see in the human frame the most perfect of all known organization. If you want *argument from being*, then man in his conscious dependence has the clearest conviction of that independent *One* on which his own being reposes.

If you want the argument from reason and morals, then the human mind is the only known repository of both. Man is, in fact, a microcosm,—a universe in himself,—and whatever proof the whole universe affords is involved, *in principle*, in man himself. With the image of God before us, who can doubt of the divine type?

The solar system is a magnificent clock-work, of unfailing perfection. All its stupendous parts influence and are influenced by one another, yet all move on in absolute harmony. Every orb has its magnitude set off by a scale, its materials weighed in a balance, its distances measured by a line, and its velocity regulated by an infallible law. And in this celestial machinery our planet has its place, fitting therein as a wheel into a wheel in the works of a chronometer. A mere glance at this wonderful system instantly lodges a conviction within the mind that it is the contrivance of infinite skill, the work of infinite power, and, consequently, that there was a time when it had its birth.

Who can view the glories of the sun and moon, and partake of their beneficial influences, and at the same time not adore the wisdom, and praise the kindness of their Contriver and Maker! But, above all, should there be any found among rational beings so stupid, so vile, so infatuated with their vices, as to deny these works to be God's, and ascribe them to necessity of nature, or indeed a mere nothing, namely, chance! But such there are to be met with among ourselves, and such the Prophet tells us of (Isaias v. 11, 12); men who had so debauched themselves with drink, and enervated their minds by pleasure, that they *regarded not the work of the Lord*, nor *considered the operation of His hands*. Such persons, having led their lives in such a manner as to

wish there was no God to call them to account, therefore stupidly ascribe those manifest demonstrations of the infinite power and wisdom of God to mere nothing, rather than to their Author.

But may we not, with as good reason, imagine a lighted candle, or a lighthouse, to be the work of chance, and not of man, as those glories of the heavens not to be the works of God? For it is very certain that as much wisdom, art, and power worthy of God, is shown in the lights of the heavens, as there is in those upon earth worthy of man, which none can doubt were contrived and made by man. If there be any Being that can effect those things, which man, although endowed with reason, is not able to effect; that Being is certainly greater and stronger and wiser than man. But man is not able to make the Heavens; therefore the Being that did make them excels man in art, counsel, prudence, and power.

And if the heavens so plainly declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth the work of His hands (Psal. xviii.); if those characters, those impressions of the Divine Hand, are to be legible, *that their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world,* so that *there are no speeches nor languages where their voices are not heard:* what power but that of the Almighty could give those celestial orbs such prodigious projections as they are found to have? orbs that run into such amazingly long ellipses as approach to parabolas, that it is wonderful how their projectile force should carry them to such immense distances, and their gravity at the same time bring them back, and wonderfully retain them in their orbs.

The sun, with all attendant planets, is but a very

little part of the grand machine of the universe. Every star, though in appearance no bigger than the diamond that glitters in a lady's ring, is really a *vast globe*, like the sun in size and in glory, no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant source of our day. So that every star is not barely a world, but the *centre* of a magnificent system; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence. All which are lost to our sight, in unmeasurable worlds of God. That the stars appear like so many diminutive and scarcely distinguishable *points*, is owing to their immense and inconceivable distance. Immense and inconceivable, indeed, it is; since a ball shot from a loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous rate, almost seven hundred thousand years before it could reach the *nearest* of those twinkling luminaries. Can anything be more wonderful than these observations? Yes, there are truths far more stupendous; there are scenes far more extensive. As there is no end of the Almighty Maker's greatness; so no imagination can set limits to His creating hand. Could you soar beyond the moon, and pass through all the planetary choir; could you wing your way to the highest apparent star, and take your stand on one of those loftiest pinnacles of Heaven; you would there see *other skies* expanded; *another sun*, distributing his inexhaustible beams by day; *other stars*, that gild the horrors of the alternate night; and *others*, perhaps nobler systems, established, in unknown profusion, through the boundless dimensions of space. Nor does the dominion of the universal Sovereign terminate there. Even at the end of this vast tour, you would find yourself advanced no further than the suburbs of creation; arrived only at

the frontiers of the great *Jehovah's* kingdom. *Lo, these are parts of his ways* (Job xxvi. 14). And if so, what is the Creator Himself?

As God's works have been shown to be manifest demonstrations of his existence; so they are no less of His perfections, particularly of His infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; inasmuch as every workman is known by his work. A palace that should have nothing defective in situation, beauty, or convenience, would argue the architect to have been a man of sagacity, and skilful in geometry, arithmetic, optics, and all the other mathematical sciences serving to make a man a complete architect; yea, to have some judgment in physical and natural philosophy, too. And so this glorious scene of God's works, the Heavens, plainly demonstrates the Workman's infinite wisdom to contrive, His omnipotency to make, and His infinite goodness, in being so indulgent to all the creatures as to contrive and order all His works for their good. For what less than *Infinite* could effect all those grand things which are manifest in the Heavens?

What architect could build such vast masses, and such an innumerable company of them, too—what mathematician could so exactly adjust their distances? What mechanic so nicely adapt their motions, so well contrive their figures, as in the very best manner may serve to their preservation and benefit, and the convenience of the other globes, also? What naturalist, what philosopher, could impregnate every globe with a thing of that absolute necessity to its conservation as that of gravity is? What optician, what chemist could ever have hit upon such a noble apparatus for light and heat, as the sun, the moon, and the stars? could amass to-

gether such a pile of fire as the sun is? could appoint such lights as the moon and other secondaries are? None certainly could do these things but God.

The motion of the heavens and earth—a demonstration of God. "Let us think," says Plato, "how it is possible for so prodigious a mass to be carried round for so long a time by any natural cause. For which," says he, "I assert God to be the Cause, and that it is impossible to be otherwise." If we consider that those motions are not at random, but such as show wise design and counsel; if we consider that the motions and orbits of the planets do not interfere with one another, but tend one and the same way—from west to east—and lie in planes but little inclined to one another, or when inclined, that it should be very beneficially so; what could all this be but the work of a wise and kind, as well as omnipotent Creator, and orderer of the world's affairs? a work which is as plain a signal of God as that of a clock, or other machine, is of man. And Aristotle argues (Physic, lib. viii., c. 5): "Everything that is moved must of necessity be moved by something; and that thing must be moved by something that is moved either by another, or not by another, thing. If it be moved by that which is moved by another, we must of necessity," saith he, "come to some prime mover, that is not moved by another. For it is impossible that what moveth and is moved by another, shall proceed *in infinitum*." Our minds cannot be satisfied with a series of successive, dependent causes and effects, without something first and independent. We pass from effect to cause, and from that to a higher cause, in search of something on which the mind can rest; but if we can do nothing but repeat this process, there is no use in it.

We move our limbs, but make no advance. Our question is not answered, but evaded. The mind cannot acquiesce in the destiny thus presented to it, of being referred from event to event, from object to object, along an interminable vista of causation and time. Now, this mode of stating the reply—to say that the mind *cannot thus be satisfied*, appears to be equivalent to saying that the mind is conscious of a principle, in virtue of which such a view as this must be rejected; the mind takes refuge in the assumption of a First Cause, from an employment inconsistent with its own nature.

Thus the motions of the earth, and of the heavens, are so many manifestations and demonstrations of an Infinite Being, that hath imparted motion unto them; and, consequently, so many proofs of an Almighty first mover.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD COLLECTED BY THE HEATHENS FROM THE WORKS OF THE HEAVENS.

The first, and most ready and natural deduction we can make from such a glorious scene of workmanship as is before represented, is to consider who the great workman was.

That the author of all this glorious scene of things was God, is such a conclusion that even the most ignorant and barbarous part of mankind have been able to make, from the manifest signals visible therein; signals so plain and conclusive, as Cicero remarks, "Among all tribes of animals, none but man hath any sense of a God; and among mankind there is no nation so savage and barbarous which, although ignorant of what god it ought to have, yet well knows it ought to have one"

(Lib. de Leg.). And after the same manner, Seneca says: "There is no nation in the world so void of law and morality as not to believe but there are some gods." Nay, so positive he is in this matter that, in another place, he expressly says: "They lie that say they believe there is no God, for although by day they may affirm so to thee, yet by night they are to themselves conscious of the contrary" (Epist. 117). Much more could I cite out of this famous heathen; but one passage relating to the heavens shall suffice, and that is in his discourse showing "why evils befall good men, seeing there is a Divine Providence." He takes it for granted in this discourse that there is a Divine Power and Providence governing the world; that the world could not stand without some ruler; that so regular motions of the stars could not be the effects of a fortuitous force; that this undisturbed velocity, which bears the weight of so many things, in the earth and seas; so great a number of heavenly lights, both very illustrious, and also shining by a manifest disposal, must needs proceed by the direction of some eternal law: that this can never be the order of straggling matter; neither is it possible for things fortuitously and rashly combined to depend upon, and manifest, so much art.

The opinion of all nations concerning the Deity is manifest from the deductions which they have made from God's works, particularly from the heavens; namely, that there is a God. Such as have denied the existence of God, and have deduced His works from chance, etc., are singular and monstrous in their opinions. Thus saith Ælian: There never was any barbarian that condemned the Deity; nor called in question whether there be any gods or no; or whether they take care of

human affairs. No man, neither Indian nor Celt, nor Egyptian, ever entertained any such thought as Eumerus, Epicurus, etc. ("De Var. Hist.," lib. ii., c. 31). So one of Plato's arguments for the proof of a God is: "The unanimous consent of all, both Greeks and barbarians who confess there are gods" ("De Legibus," lib. x.). And Plutarch similar to what our Psalmist affirms: "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Psal. xviii. 2), tells us whence they collected this knowledge of a Deity. "Men," says he, "began to acknowledge a God, when they saw the stars maintain so great a harmony, and the days and nights through all the year, both summer and winter, to observe their stated risings and settings" ("De placit.," lib. i., c. 6). To these evidences I might have added many others, but it would be needless, as well as tedious, since these have given us the sense of mankind, as well as their own opinion in the matter. I shall only deduce one thing more, namely: "What," saith Cicero, "can be so plain and so clear, as when we behold the heavenly bodies, that we should conclude there is some Deity of a most excellent mind, by which these things are governed? a present, an almighty God, which he that doubts of, I do not understand, saith he, why he should not as well doubt whether there be a sun or no that shines" ("De Nat. Deor.," lib. ii., c. 2).

Thus the heavens declare the glory of God, even to the heathen world; so manifestly are they the handiworks of God.

The testimony of the sacred Scripture now comes and crowns the theistic argument. It authenticates the deductions of enlightened reason, and confirms

those primitive judgments whereby we repose in the belief that God is, and that He is what He is.

The very first sublime utterance of inspiration, *In the beginning God created heaven and earth,* sets its seal that our reasoning upwards from matter and mind to the Infinite creating mind is true.

The sacred Scripture presupposes the divine existence, and never formally attempts to prove it. And if men will not believe on the ground of this evidence—the material phenomena that lie around us, and the mental phenomena that arise within us, and the superadded evidences of revealed truth—neither would they believe though the Eternal uttered His voice from the rent heavens, and declared what He has done in His word. "I am God, and besides me there is none else."

Thus far the proof has been dogmatic; but after all, to use the weighty words of Dr. Arnald: "The real proof is the practical one; that is, let a man live on the hypothesis of its falsehood, and the practical result will be bad; that is, a man's besetting and constitutional faults will not be checked; and some of his noblest feelings will be unexercised, so that if he be right in his opinions, truth and goodness are at variance with one another, and falsehood is more favorable to our moral perfections than truth; which seems the most monstrous conclusion which the human mind can possibly arrive at" ("Life of Arnald," Vol. II., p. 1).

ATHEISM.

MEN may be living without God in the world, and yet hold that there is a God in the heavens. It is the man who disowns God, who theoretically and practically denies His existence, that bears on his brow the self-inflicted brand, "I am an Atheist."

Our age does not lack such daring mortals; they may be found here and there in the schools, and in the workshops, wielding the press, or spouting from the rostrum, or taking up the gauntlet on the platform; but in general, the mass of society which is not Christian is infidel rather than Atheistical.

Atheists rest in the dark dogma that the highest being is man. People in many parts would turn out and look at a real avowed atheist, just as they do at some singularly huge foreign animals, with mingled astonishment and alarm. Faith in God is so inherent in the heart of humanity, and so essential to our reason, that many wise and good men have doubted if ever there lived an intelligent mortal so absolutely destitute of religious belief as is implied in Atheism. Addison would have told a man who gloried in this distinction that he was an impudent liar, and that he knew it. Bacon accounted Atheism to be rather in the lip than in the heart, and that a contemplative Atheist is a prodigy, a thing unusually rare. "I confess," says Dr. Arnald, "that I believe conscientious Atheism not to exist." And it does appear an incredible thing that

man possessed of intelligence and feeling, standing amid this glorious amphitheatre of earth and sky, gazing upon the grand and lovely forms, and listening to its thousand voices of rapturous praises, can coolly deny the existence of Him who sits enthroned above all heavens.

Never was Atheism more boldly manifested than in the history of modern Europe. The materialistic school of France sent forth an infidel science and literature of the broadest stamp, and that school had its disciples in many lands. In the "Système de la Nature," the celebrated work of Baron d'Holbach, the most absolute atheism is asserted as openly as the existence of God is maintained in any of our treatises on natural theology. The grand object of the book being to show that there is no God—that there is no such thing as mind—nothing beyond or different from the material world. The great work of Auguste Comte, which has attained for him a wide reputation, is the production of a similar school.

The Revolutionary leaders of France, in the height of their impiety, not only sought to destroy every vestige of Christianity by abolishing the Lord's day, altering the calendars, plundering and shutting up or converting into warehouses the various churches; but in the climax of their guilt, they brought the convention to yield to the cry that the era had come when men should cease to fear the Eternal, and in the person of a strumpet, enthroned with heathen orgies the goddess of Reason as the object of national worship.

Let the throne in the heavens be declared vacant, and the proclamation be made throughout the land that there is no God, and society is reft of all its safeguards,

crime is committed without dread of punishment, and the vilest passions of the vilest men rush onward without restraint. For how utterly feeble is the check imposed by human law when, by denying the divine existence, they have succeeded in exploding the law of God. France was like a troubled sea, a sea of blood under the reign of Atheism.

The people at last recoiled from the impious and horrid system. "Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord."

"The republic of these men without a God," remarks Lamartine, "was quickly stranded."

Sir Isaac Newton sat one day examining a new artificial globe of superior design and workmanship, when an atheistic friend with whom he had had frequent discussions, entered the room, and after admiring the new globe, asked the very natural question, "Who made it?" To which the philosopher replied, "Nobody; it happened." Such answer to such question strikes us at once as not only unreasonable but absurd, and yet it is substantially the answer the Atheist must give to the question, "Who made the world?"

It is strictly true that from nothing, nothing can proceed. Something must have existed before all finite beings, or whence came these finite beings into existence? *That something* must be self-existent, underived, necessary, and eternal. It is He who is the *I am*, and to whom we apply the sublime language of the ancient prophet: "Before the mountains were made, or the earth and the world were formed; from eternity and to eternity thou art God" (Psalm lxxxix. 2).

Creation with the pantheist *is not a free act, but an inevitable necessity*. Hegel says God did not create the

world; He is eternally creating it; and the men of the Emerson school tell us that the world is "a production of God in the unconscious." We, according to enlightened reason and spiritual truth, have been wont to believe that God existed independently from eternity in a state of absolute perfection, and that of His own good pleasure He called the universe into being.

Moses began his historical narrative by declaring, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." The pious in all ages, on looking over all creation, have said, "Our God made the heavens," and the heavenly inhabitants cry: "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." But according to the pantheist, this is all a delusion. The divine free will is a nonentity.

Baron Humboldt in his "Cosmos" makes no reference to a living Omnipotent God. He sinks the spiritual in the material. After having travelled over a considerable portion of the earth's surface, and made himself acquainted with all that is at present known of the physical phenomena of the universe, the illustrious German thus acknowledges, in the midst of his fourscore years, no higher agency than inherent material forces acting under the government of a primordial necessity. Divine providence is thus interdicted; and this good universe moves onward, unfolding its forms of life and grandeur, without the hand of Him that made it. This may consist with Hegelianism or with some other form of transcendental philosophy, but it does not consist with the deeper philosophy of man's inward nature. It might do if we had heads and no hearts. The intellect may rest in it for a while, but the soul with its capacities

and cravings cannot repose there for a moment. Our very heartstrings must be torn out, and all our upward aspirations repressed before we can be satisfied with this thing of fate, this primordial necessity, in the room of the living and ever-ruling God. Even in an æsthetic view this method of philosophy stands condemned. The sacred Scriptures declare God infinitely perfect, therefore without end (Psal. cxliv.).

Men of the anti-miracle school of Germany—Spinoza, Paulus, Strauss—who adopt as a fundamental principle the impossibility of supernatural intervention, must either deny that God is, or deprive Him of His personality. Once admit the existence of a personal God, Himself uncaused and the cause of all, and you cannot rationally deny that He may interpose in the concerns of the universe.

Grant that the Almighty intervened in calling into existence the first creation, and you cannot reasonably withhold your assent that if evidence in support of it exist, he may have intervened in originating Christianity, the second creation.

The rationalist who, in the face of all evidence, takes up the position that miracles are impossible, must be driven back to another position, viz.: the non-existence of a Being who can perform supernatural works. Strauss in maintaining the impossibility of miracles, as well as Hume in asserting their incredibility, have been flagrantly guilty of a *petitio principii*—a begging of the question. It is nothing more than his *ipse dixit*.

It is certainly an undeniable truth that neither the wisdom of God, nor the credit of His inspired book, is impaired by any miracle we find in it.

The ridiculous notions maintained by free-thinkers in

their writings scarcely deserve serious refutation; and perhaps the best method of answering them would be to select from their works all the absurd and impractical notions, which they so stiffly maintain in order to evade the belief of the Christian religion. I shall here throw together a few of their principal tenets, under the contradictory title of *The Unbeliever's Creed:*

I believe that there is no God, but that matter is God, and that God is matter; and that it is no matter whether there is any God, or no.

I believe, also, that the world was not made; that it will last forever, world without end.

I believe that a man is a beast, that the soul is the body, and that the body is the soul; and after death there is neither body nor soul.

I believe that there is no religion, that natural religion is the only religion, and that all religion is unnatural.

I believe not in Moses; I believe in the first philosophy; I believe not the Evangelists; I believe in Chubb, Toland, Tyndal; I believe in Voltaire, Paine, and Lord Bolingbroke; I believe in Baron d'Holbach; I believe not St. Paul.

I believe not Revelation; I believe in the Talmud; I believe in the Alcoran. I believe not the Bible; I believe in Socrates, in Confucius. I believe in Mahomet; I believe not in Christ. Lastly, I believe in all unbelief.

O kind reader! plunge not into eternity with brains tuned with such madness as this. Is your confidence built on the mercy of God without a Saviour? But God out of Christ "is a consuming fire." Embalm in your heart the counsel of eternal wisdom: "Cease not, O my son, to hear instruction, and be not ignorant of the words of knowledge" (Prov. xix. 27).

THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

ALL must agree that men, by violating the just and holy laws of God, become obnoxious to His just anger, unless they in some way satisfy His justice—as a convict criminal who has not satisfied, or is indebted to the law, until he has suffered the punishment for his crime which the law thinks fit to inflict, or else finds favor, and has it remitted him. The iniquities of mankind outnumber *the stars in heaven, and the sand upon the seashore.* Every sin is a violation of the laws of God, and has weight enough to sink a soul into eternal ruin; and the reason is because sin is an opposition to God, the highest authority, whose laws are most just and equitable, and because, moreover, we have an infinite obligation to obey Him, both as His creatures and dependents, who live by His favor and bounty.

The sinner is infinitely indebted to God's justice, and unless some miracle of mercy intervene, the Divine justice cannot be satisfied but by his undergoing an *infinite punishment.* And all must acknowledge it just that sin, being the greatest possible evil, should be repaid with the greatest possible, that is, *eternal punishment.*

So vast a debt, then, lying upon all mankind by reason of their sins; it is most true that it was utterly impossible for them, of themselves, ever to clear this debt, and make full satisfaction to the Divine justice; and the sad consequences, should it have still remained upon record,

would have been no less than eternal misery. Nor is there anything valuable enough in all the treasures of nature to buy off this sentence, *just* though sad: *The soul that sinneth shall die.* All men that ever lived must have been involved in it, had not the wisdom and goodness of God found out a means both to satisfy His justice, and, at the same time, to be merciful to His miserable creatures; to forgive the debt to those that had nothing to pay, and yet to have full satisfaction made Him for it. It is what could never have entered into the heart of man to conceive; it is the great mystery of Divine love, which even the angels desire to look into, and it is that which is and shall be the subject of eternal Alleluias in heaven. That which exalts the compassion of God to the highest degree, and makes it indeed miraculous, is the amazing course He took, thus to show mercy in the pardon of sinners, and yet *to satisfy His justice*, too.

God had before solemnly declared to our first parents, and very often afterward, that *the soul that sinned it should die;* and His justice was concerned to see that sentence executed; and in the nature of the thing, likewise, it was but what ought to be—that the violators of God's holy and good commands, ungrateful rebels against their Creator and greatest Benefactor, should receive a due recompense for their wickedness. Now, justice is as essential to God as mercy; and though His infinite goodness moved Him to have compassion upon sinners, yet His justice pleaded for punishment; mercy would remit the debt, but justice required satisfaction. A difficulty this which mortal wit could never solve. But God, who is infinitely wise, as well as good and just, that the work of His hands might not perish, nor His

image and likeness be forever miserable, and that His justice, likewise, might be fully satisfied; contrived a marvellous way for the redemption of sinners, by freely forgiving them their vast debt, and yet making full satisfaction to His justice for the sins of the whole world. And that was, by the Incarnation of His blessed Son, and substituting Him in our stead to suffer, as the representative of mankind, the punishment due to their iniquities, and by His spotless Blood to make a universal atonement, and through the merits of that, His precious Sacrifice (for what is above the merit of the Blood of the Son of God?), to purchase for them pardon and forgiveness, the love and favor of God in this world, and eternal enjoyment of Him in the next; and by this means, as St. Paul expresses it, to declare His justice: "that He himself may be just, and the Justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ" (Rom. iii. 26). Thus mercy and truth are miraculously met together, and justice and peace have kissed each other. What love can be greater than this, that God should send His eternal Son into the world to be the propitiation for sinners! And that, while we are enemies, Christ should die for us and bear our sins in His own body on the tree, that, through His stripes, we might be healed!

The Jews, to this day, speak of Jesus as one who suffered according to the law of God, for seducing the Israelites from the faith of their forefathers. The prophet gives a different view of Christ's death. Instead of dying for His *own* sins, He was wounded for *our* transgressions. There is no passage of Scripture in which the substitution of Christ's sufferings in place of those of the sinner is more clearly revealed than in Isa. liii. No one speaks more explicitly on this great mystery than our

prophet, many hundred years before it was accomplished: "Surely, He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed."

All Christians agree that men are sinners, and that sin deserves punishment; but when we come to ask how it may be forgiven, and for what consideration God forgives it, we begin to differ. The Trinitarian doctrine is that the eternal Son of God, the uncreated, and equal with the Father, became incarnate, and suffered the *punishment of our sins* as our substitute; and for the sake of what He has done we may be forgiven. They who are opposed to us, on the other hand, believe that Christ, a created being, but still so very exalted that He may be called a God, yet not the supreme God, took our nature upon Him that He might teach men a purer religion than was ever before known, and set before them a perfect example, and thus draw them away from their sins; so that He saves us from our sins, not by atoning for them, but just as any merely good man does who so teaches and practices as to lead men from sin to holiness. While engaged in this work they assert that the Jews seized upon the Saviour and put Him to death; and Jesus, to show that He was persuaded of the truth of what He had taught, gave Himself up to die just as the martyrs sealed their testimony with their blood, and that thus Christ may be said to have died for us, because He met His death in seeking to do us good. In a word, they *all* deny entirely the *substitution* of Christ in our place, to bear the *punishment* of our sins; we *affirm* it. They expect to be saved through their repentance; by the mercy of God we expect salva-

tion through the sole merits of the suffering Son of God.

There is certainly a great difference, then, between saying that Christ was created and uncreated; that He died to bear the punishment of our sins, and that it was only to confirm His doctrines; that we are saved by our merits or repentance, and that we are saved entirely by the merits of another. We regard Christ as the Almighty substitute for a whole world of sinners, taking their punishment upon Himself, and by virtue thereof offering pardon to all who will come unto Him by faith and repentance. This doctrine of the Catholic Church is sustained by the sacred Scripture.

"He was wounded for our transactions." . . . "All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 4–6). What would any unprejudiced reader gather from such expressions, but that the punishment of a world of iniquities was laid upon Christ? The prophet says, "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." Now, a chastisement is a punishment of a fault, and for whose fault was Christ chastised? Not for His own, certainly, for He was perfectly innocent. Therefore, if He was chastised it was as a punishment for sin, and if He had no sin of His own, it must have been for that of others.

Christ's sufferings were not so much from man as from God, not bodily so much as of the soul. "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. God made Christ's *soul*, not His body alone, an offering for sin; and such in fact was the case. In the garden of Gethsemane, when no hand of man had touched Him, His soul was

exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death; and so far as expressions enable us to judge, we should think that He endured more there than when He was on the cross; for He sweated "as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground."

Now, what caused this anguish of mind? Was it the fear of death? Certainly not, and we should be almost ashamed of the Saviour if the mere dread of anticipated death could have wrung drops of blood from Him in the garden, when the martyrs have stood hour after hour in the midst of the fire, and sung canticles of praise; they long hung upon the cross, and comforted friends as if they were lying upon a bed of roses. It must be ever remembered that Christ's death was not a mere martyrdom. A martyr is one who dies for religion's sake, who is put to death for preaching and maintaining the truth. Christ, indeed, was put to death for preaching the Gospel; yet He was not a martyr, but He was much more than a martyr. Had He been a mere man, He would have been rightly called a martyr; but as He was not a mere man, so He was not a mere martyr. Man dies as a martyr, but the Son of God dies as an Atoning Sacrifice.

Christ had something more to endure than mere bodily anguish, and this is very evident from the whole narrative of His death. All the complaints of Christ's suffering were made when no hand of man was upon Him. Did He cry out when they scourged Him? Did He when they drove the nails or when they raised the cross to its place with that sudden jerk which was said to cause dislocation of the limbs? These were the points of time when we should suppose His bodily anguish would have been greatest, and yet then not a

complaint was heard. It was in the garden. and it was again on the cross during the three hours of darkness when men had ceased to revile Him, that He cried out in agony, and *then* it was not of *men* that He complained, but of *God:* "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46). "My Father! let this chalice pass from me," as if *God* was putting Him to grief and afflicting His soul.

Now, if Jesus Christ was only a martyr, He ought to have had divine supports in His dying hour, yet they were withdrawn from Him. If He were only a martyr the chief anguish should have been bodily, but that of Jesus was mental, and His bodily sufferings wrung from Him no complaint.

We can easily solve this difficulty. We believe that when Jesus Christ suffered on the cross our nature suffered in Him, and thus, as St. Paul says: "If one died for all, then did *all* die." "Our old man is crucified *in Him*, that the *body* of sin might be destroyed." We believe that in the death of Jesus it was literally true that "it pleased the *Lord* to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief, and the Lord then made His *soul* an offering for sin." We believe that in that hour in Gethsemane *God* was crowding the sufferings which the sins of a world deserved upon the innocent Jesus, and that He was made willing to bear them for us. We believe that He was tasting in that chalice which He prayed might pass away, and yet submissively took as much of the misery of hell as He could possibly endure. We believe that when He cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" that it was not an unfounded complaint, but that God had forsaken Him to some degree as He does the spirits in

torment, and had given Him to know, as far as He could know, what we should have experienced if God had cast us off forever. In all this transaction His soul bore miseries that ours would have borne if He had not died, so that "God made to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all," and "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him."

Dark as was that night in Gethsemane, and dark as were those hours on the cross, there was a deeper darkness upon the soul of the Redeemer, for the blackness of the pit involved Him, and the sunlight and the light of God's countenance were at the same time withdrawn from Him.

Mysterious hour of our Saviour's passion! We would not rashly intrude upon it, or seek in vain curiosity to pry into its secrets! But we read that, "God should afflict His soul," and lay our sins upon Him, and here we find that His soul was afflicted by God, therefore we conclude that here our sins were laid upon Him, and that thus the great atonement was made. If He was a martyr He might have died peacefully; but He was the sinner's substitute, He was laden with the sins of the whole world as the Lamb of Jewish offering was with the sins of the offerer. No wonder that He groaned under such a burden, that He sweat drops of blood, that He cried out to God who had forsaken Him. This explains also the whole Jewish sacrificial system, where so many thousand victims died in the place of sinners, to typify Christ the Lamb of God dying in the room of a world of sinners, and this explains all those texts which speak of Christ as "dying the Just for the unjust," as "giving His life a ransom for all," as "the propitiation for our sins."

We cannot stop now to answer the objections which are made against this view, such as the injustice of laying our sins upon an innocent sufferer, which of course involves no injustice if He voluntarily took them upon Himself. Our only aim in this chapter has been to show that Christ was our substituted victim, dying in our place, receiving in His soul that which our souls deserved to receive, and so "reconciling us to God" "by His own body on the tree." If the doctrine of Christ's substitution be true, we are to seek salvation by His merits and atonement; if it be not true, we have to be saved by our own merits or repentance. The Unitarian goes in the presence of God with his load of sins, just as a man might go into the presence of one to whom he owed an immense debt, trusting to the good nature of his creditor to be forgiven. The Trinitarian goes before his God with the like debt of sin, but pleading that Christ has taken it upon Himself and paid it for him, and looking to the atonement as the consideration for which it may be cancelled. It will be seen that there is a vast difference between the two. And, after all, the question is not what we may think right, but what God has appointed. He is sinned against, and it is for Him to say how the debt shall be forgiven. If He has appointed forgiveness through Christ's substitution, it is not for us to affirm that He will forgive us on our own repentance, without that substituted offering. We believe that "Jesus Christ is the way," and that "without shedding of His blood there is no remission." We believe that "our sins were laid on Him," in the Garden and on the Cross, and "by His stripes we are healed."

Let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanse,

and conceive some juster apprehensions of the unknown richness of my Saviour's atonement. I am informed by a writer who cannot mistake, that the High-Priest of my profession, who was also the sacrifice for my sins, *is higher than the heavens* (Heb. vii.), more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly mansions, and all their illustrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled at the consideration of its excessive guilt, how do all my drooping powers revive at this delightful thought! The poor criminal, that seemed to be tottering on the very brink of the eternal pit, is *raised* by such a belief, even to the portals of paradise. I do not, I cannot doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. While I see a glimpse of its matchless excellency, and *verily believe* in its merits, I know not what it is to feel any misgiving suspicions; but am steadfast in faith, and joyful through hope. Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that prodigious sum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuser of the brethren, load me with invectives; this one plea, *a divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly annulled every indictment. For though there be much turpitude, and manifold transgressions, "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Nay, were I chargeable with all the vilest deeds which have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this most deplorable case, I need not sink into despair. Even such guilt, though grievous beyond all expression, is not to be compared with that *abundance* of *grace* and righteousness, which dwell in the incarnate *divinity*. How great, how transcendently glorious, are the perfections of the adored Jehovah! So great, so superlatively precious

is the *expiation* of the dying Jesus. It is impossible for the human mind to exalt this atonement too highly; it is impossible for the *humble penitent* to confide in it too steadily. The Scriptures of eternal truth have said it, that the blood on which we rely is God's *own blood* (Acts xx. 28), and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION.

THE Incarnation of the Son of God is a summary comprehension of the Christian faith: *God manifested in the flesh.* This is the main principle, the chief oracle of the Christian belief; the first stone in the foundation of the Church, the main basis that supports the *Pillar of truth, Christ*, God incarnate; *God manifested in the flesh.* First, see this glorious description of our Christian faith: "And evidently (without controversy) great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). A magnificent preface and introduction ushering in this sacred truth; requiring not only the assent, but the obedience, nay, the devotion and adoration of our faith. When He brings His First-begotten into the world, He proclaims before Him: "Let all the angels of God worship Him, let every knee bow before Him, let every tongue confess to Him." St. Paul cannot mention Christ, or the mystery of the Gospel, but he breaks forth into all possible expressions of words, into all terms of admiration. Indeed all God's works are wonderful. As David meditating on the works of creation (Psal. cxxxix. 17): "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them!" True; but the work of *redemption*, this masterpiece of God's power, and wisdom in His Son's Incarnation, the Scripture puts upon it all titles and attributes of power and excellency: *The*

word of truth (Col. i. 5). *The word of the kingdom* (Matt. xiii. 19). *The words of God* (1 Pet. iv. 11). *The counsel of God* (Acts xx. 27). *A faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation* (1 Tim. i. 15). And out of all these put together, arises a short, but yet full, complete definition of all *divinity;* a compendious epitome of all religion.

The Christian religion, faith and divinity, it is unquestionably *great mystery of godliness.* A few words, yet the full title, and epitome of the Scripture, the sum of all sacred truth. What is the use and end of Scripture? "To instruct us to salvation by the faith which is in Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. iii. 15). To acquaint us with the mystery of godliness. It is the grand text of all sermons; the argument and theme of all theological discourses; the marrow and kernel of all discourses; the drift and centre of all the meditations of *saints* and *angels.*

God manifested in the flesh. This is a mystery. It is the title of the Gospel: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark iv. 11); that is the Gospel. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery" (1 Cor. ii. 17); "a mystery which was kept secret from eternity" (Rom. xvi. 25).

Now to understand the nature of it; a mystery is *sacrum secretum, occultam habens intelligentiam;* a holy secret the understanding and knowledge of which, is close and concealed. And then is Θεός ἐν σαρκὶ, the sum of Christianity, a mystery; it carries with it these conditions: First of all, is it a mystery? then it is in itself full of secrecy and obscurity, naturally unknown, veiled up in great reservedness. It is called an hidden mystery: "The mystery which hath been hidden from ages and

generations" (Col. i. 26). 1. "Hidden in God" (Ephes. iii. 9); locked up in the closet of His breast. 2. Hidden in Christ (Colos. ii. 3). "In him are hid all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge." 3. Hidden in the Scripture, which is veiled up with many mysteries; a book in itself sealed with seven seals; no man or angel is able fully to open it (Rev. vi. 3). 4. Hidden in those types, and shadows, and ceremonies of the Law. 5. Nay, even the Gospel, though that brings this to some light, yet it is but imperfectly discovered, still a great part is hidden; there is no clear discovery. We know but in part; faith sees not clearly; *adhuc manifestat se nobis sicut vult non sicut est* (St. Bernard). He doth not yet fully disclose Himself to us.

It is a mystery, therefore the knowledge of it is a matter of revelation, not to be known by the light of nature, but it is of supernatural discovery. The eye of nature cannot see it, nor the ear of nature hear it, nor did it ever enter into the heart of a natural man; but God hath revealed it to us by His Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). All other knowledge has some prints and footsteps in nature, but this is a mere novelty to nature. Herein it exceeds the perfection of the Law; that is written in our hearts by nature; light of reason discovers the truth of the Law; but the Gospel is not inbred in us, it must be revealed and discovered by God Himself. We cannot see the sun, but by the light of the sun; nor know Christ, till Himself discovers Himself. St. Paul prays that they may have the spirit of revelation.

Therefore the discovery of the mystery of the Gospel is a matter of dispensation; a voluntary discovery to whom God pleases, and as much as He pleases.

This Christ proclaims: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones: Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 25, 26). This will answer all questions, and that of Judas (not the Iscariot) to Christ (John xiv. 22): "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world?" For natural knowledge, He enlightens *every man that comes into the world* (John i. 9). But this knowledge He dispenses at pleasure, less to the Jews, more to the Christians. To the prophets, it was the light of a candle; to the apostles, the light of the day-star: Hereafter we shall see the sun in his shining beauty.

To communicate His secret thoughts, the mysteries of His will, is a fruit of greatest love. *You are my friends*, says Christ, *for I tell you all things*. St. John learnt it in the bosom of Christ; and he was the beloved disciple; he lay on the bosom, the seat of affection, and of secrets too. One dram of this knowledge is better than the knowledge of all the secrets of nature.

We must not approach to the looking into these mysteries, but with much fear and reverence. How hath God exacted holiness, in all that draw near to be partakers of His sacred mysteries? *Put off thy shoes, it is holy ground.* When God came down on the mount, they were all to wash and cleanse themselves; it was death to come irreverently. Nadab and Abiu were destroyed by fire for an unhallowed approach (Levit. x.). "The Lord will be sanctified in them that approach to Him" (verse 3). Even many thousand men were slain for an irreverent approach to the Ark (the type of our mysteries). The great charge which God laid

upon the Jews, and for which He threatened to remove His worship from them to the Gentiles, was profanation. They profaned His worship, defiled the table of the Lord, and made that which was laid thereupon contemptible (Mal. i. 12).

The mysteries of religion are not slightly, or vainly, or sportingly to be handled; but heedfully, soberly, with all venerable attention. The minister who speaks of them, how holily must he handle them. "Let him speak as the words of God" (1 Pet. iv. 11).

It was the charge of the priests in the Old Law: "Be ye clean, you that carry the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. lii. 11). This made Moses cry out: "I beseech Thee, Lord, send whom Thou wilt send" (Exod. iv. 13). And St. Paul to cry out: "Who is so sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16). In these mysteries we must be wise to sobriety; gravity and sobriety are the handmaids of piety; they are the ushers that always attend religion. We must "be wise unto sobriety" (Rom. xii. 3).

Religion and the Christian doctrine are a mystery, therefore to be apprehended by faith, not to be fathomed by reason. Reason will judge that to be a foolery which faith reverences and adores as a mystery. It is called the mystery of faith (1 Tim. iii. 9), not the mystery of reason or understanding. And they who are initiated into these mysteries, are called believers, not men of reason and understanding.

We are called *credentes not rationales*, says St. Augustine. It is not *intelligendi vivacitas*, but *credendi simplicitas*, that must converse in these mysteries.

Reason laughs at that in Sarah, which faith in Abraham embraces and rejoices in. Faith looks for a reve-

lation that God says it is so; searches not after demonstration, or reason why it should be so. *Sufficit pro universis rationibus auctor Deus.* The mysteries of religion check and silence reason, as the angel did Zachary, for asking: "Whereby shall I know this?" —he would have reason. What says the angel? "Behold, thou shalt be dumb" (Luke i. 20): he stops his mouth. Reason, deduced from the principles of Faith, and subordinate to the doctrine of Faith, is lawful; but when it opposes Faith, then it is unlawful. Reason questions, how can three persons be one Godhead? Faith quiets reason; my soul, keep thou silent unto God; believe and adore it; it is a mystery. Reason questions, how can God be made man? the Divinity and Humanity joined in one Person? Faith hears an oracle of Scripture, I must not inquire, it is a mystery. Reason murmurs, how can a man be born again, and regenerate, and die anew, and live anew? How can water wash away sin? Faith answers: The work is spiritual, beyond reason; it is a mystery. Reason cavils, how can Christ give us His flesh to eat, and His blood to drink? How can a form of bread and a taste of wine convey grace, seal up salvation? It is a mystery. *Magis sentio, quam intelligo: Tota ratio operis, est potentia operantis.* In these supernatural truths, *sapientia hominis, officina erroris;* exclude reasoning, make use of believing. It is the taste of Faith that can relish this hidden manna.

We have seen the nature of it; it is a *mystery.* The quantity and just proportion of this *mystery,* it is no petty and inferior *truth,* but a mystery of the first magnitude, *a great mystery.* The Scripture advances it with all superlative terms, magnifies the *greatness* of it.

St. Paul calls it an excellent knowledge: "I esteem all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 8). It is called a *rich knowledge* (Rom. xi. 33). Solomon says it furnishes a man "with all precious and most beautiful wealth" (Prov. xxiv. 4). It furnishes and enriches the noblest part of man, his soul; the highest faculty of that, his spirit and understanding. Our Saviour accounts the seeking of this knowledge the seeking of precious pearls: "The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking goodly pearls" (Matt. xiii. 45). The finding of this knowledge is the finding of an hidden treasure (verse 44). All other knowledge is but poverty to this treasure; all other jewels but pebbles to this *Pearl*.

See how the Scripture extends and enlarges the greatness of this mystery. St. Paul ascribes to it all the dimensions of magnitude: "That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of this mystery" (Ephes. iii. 18). And Job thus magnifies the incomprehensible largeness of this knowledge: "It is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, broader than the sea" (xi. 8, 9). The greatness of all other creatures may be fathomed; the height of heaven, the depth of hell, the length of the earth, the breadth of the sea, all limited and bounded, and the understanding of man may reach them. As David speaks, "I see an end of all other perfections, but Thy word is exceeding large."

This mystery of God-incarnate, *God manifested in the flesh*, is a great mystery because it is *multiplex mysterium*, a comprehensive truth including in it manifold mysteries. Here is the mystery of Christ's two na-

tures; His Divinity and His Humanity: a glorious mystery! Christ, true and perfect God, and true and perfect man also; the glory of the Deity, and the infirmity of His Manhood, both concurring in Him. Here is the mystery of the union, and conjoining both these in one. A strange conjunction! The circumference of His infinite Deity, joined to the lowest centre of humanity; Eternity made subject to Time; Infinity comprehended in a poor finite creature; Omnipotency joined with infirmity. This is so great a mystery, that it caused the Jews to imagine a double Messias: one, a weak, frail, mortal man, liable to sufferings; the other, an Eternal, Omnipotent, Immortal God. They could not reconcile the several predictions of His glorious Divinity and His infirm Humanity, as this mystery teaches us. Here is the mystery of His Person, that both these natures should be strangely and admirably united into one person; that God and man should be personally one Christ, not by a concord of wills, or by a transfusion of properties, or by assistance of grace, but by an inward union and conjunction of Person. It is a mystery that divines have labored to express by any possible similitudes, and could not do it.

It is *magnum mysterium*, this of Christ's Incarnation. It is a grand mystery, because all other mysteries are subordinate and serviceable to this; all sacred truths point at this truth; all, like lines, meet in this centre. It is the end and drift of all the sacred prophecies. "To him all the prophets give testimony" (Acts x. 43). It was the sum and scope of all their predictions, "All the prophets from Samuel and afterwards, who have spoken, have foretold of these days" (Acts iii. 24). Of this salvation all the prophets have inquired and

searched diligently. He is Abraham's promised seed; Moses' great Prophet; Samuel's anointed King; Jacob's Shiloh; Isaias' Emmanuel; Jeremias' man compassed by a woman; Ezechiel's Shepherd; David's Holy One; Zachary's Branch; Solomon's Lily; David's Lord; Malachia's Angel. All that prophesied looked at Him. He was Abel's Sacrifice; Abraham's Firstfruits; Isaac's Ram; Jacob's Ladder; Moses' Passover; Aaron's Rod; the Israelite's Rock; the Patriarch's Manna; David's Tabernacle; Solomon's Temple. All types and representations of His Incarnation; all their kings were figures of this great King; all their deliverers and judges, types of this great Saviour; all their priests were ushers to bring in this *High-Priest of our profession.* All the mysteries in Scripture were serviceable to this mystery.

This mystery has far exceeded all mysteries in the world. All secrets of nature are but elements and rudiments to this oracle. The most learned men that can search into all natural knowledge, stand gazing at this, and cry out, how can this be? The vanquishing of Satan, what victory like this? The birth of God, what prince's nativity so honorable? The laws of the Church, the heavenly oracles, what laws so righteous? The privileges of the Gospel, what prerogatives so ample? "Other kings," says St. Chrysostom, "govern the bodies; this King reigns in the souls of men. Other kings fight with bodily weapons; this King with spiritual. Other kings fight against barbarians; Christ, against devils." All subtleties of art are but mere daubings and botcheries to this great mystery. That art can tame lions, lead tigers: how do we wonder at this? This mystery here can change brutish, savage, barba-

rous men, reduce them to all sobriety and moderation. Christ's Incarnation "shall make the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and lion and the sheep shall abide together, and a little child shall lead them" (Isaias xi.).

Other arts can alter nature, but this doth change it. That may polish brass, but not turn it into a purer metal. *Evangelium ferreum vas reddidit aureum.*

It is a great mystery because it is a mystery even to all men of the largest capacity, the most clear understanding. As in nature, some things seem very mysterious and obscure to a vulgar understanding, which a learned, judicious man can presently comprehend. As the eclipse of the sun, an unlearned man wonders at it as a great secret of nature, but a scholar counts the knowledge of it easy and obvious. So in works of art; an unskilful man will account that a curious piece of work which an expert artificer will judge but ordinary. But this Oracle and Mystery far exceeds the largest understanding. Solomon knew the secrets of nature; his large head was too narrow for it. He confesses, "I have not *the understanding of a man*; I have not learned this wisdom." It is "hid even from the wise and prudent" (Matt. xi. 25). *Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?* (1 Cor i. 20).

When Christ appeared to Abraham (which was a *præludium Incarnationis*) he falls on his face and trembles. When Moses had but a glimpse of this glory, "*I tremble exceedingly*," saith he. When Daniel approaches near it, it lays him for dead. It casts Paul into a rapture; John lay as a dead man, *Excellens objectum, destruit sensum.*

It is a great mystery, not only to human, but even to the highest angelical understanding: it is a great, deep mystery even unto the angels. Those stars of the morning (as Job calls them) are overwhelmed with the splendor of this sun. This great work was concealed from them; it lay hid in the womb of eternity, and they still wonder and admire at the greatness of it. See this in two places; one is (Ephes. iii. 10): "The manifold wisdom of God may be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places* through the Church." Another place is (1 Pet. i. 12): "which things the angels desire to look into." They stoop down, and pry, and desire to look into these glorious mysteries. This was prefigured in the two cherubs on the mercy-seat, looking back upon the ark and mercy-seat; and they still desire it. They cannot fully comprehend, and it is a ravishing sight to them. Strange! How dull are we! Preach we of Christ made man, it is milk for babes; rudiments for children; whereas angels count it hidden manna.

The quality and condition of this mystery; it is *a mystery of godliness*. A short but full comprehension of Christian Religion.

The art of Godliness, the skill to live holily, is a high, hidden, supernatural thing; a skill far beyond the reach and possibility of nature. It is no endowment of nature; it is hidden and concealed to natural knowledge. By nature we are utterly void of this gracious endowment. Pharao's speech is the voice of nature: "Who is the Lord, that I should hear his voice? I know not the Lord" (Exod. v. 2). Thus St. Paul describes our natural condition: "We are alienated from the life of God" (Ephes. iv. 18). "Without Christ, being aliens

from the conversation of Israel, and strangers to the Testament, having no hope of the promise, and without God in this world" (Ibid. ii. 12). This David describes (Psal. xiii. 2, 3, 5): "The Lord hath looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there be any that understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together. They have not called upon the Lord."

We naturally know there is a God; there is no man born an atheist; we have some sense of a Deity; but by nature we are all born profane, without any sense of supernatural piety; utterly ignorant how to worship and serve Him in true holiness. That knowledge of God which by nature we have, is prone to break out into one of these two extremes: either into profanation, and so we never worship Him; or into superstition, and so we misplace His worship in things abominable to Him. When we know God, we worship Him not as God (Rom. i.). The worship He requires depends upon His own will and revelation: "We know not what must be offered, till we come to the very place" (Exod. x. 26). "They know not the name of the God of this land" (4 Kings xvii. 26). Holiness, as God wants it, is no invention of nature, but a revelation of grace. Nature may lead us to civility, train us up to morality; but spiritual piety and godliness is beyond the reach of nature: *This wisdom is from above* (James iii. 17). Piety is *a mystery*, it is a secret to nature. It gives us a reason why godliness is so scarce—so few are acquainted with it. That which is natural is usual and common; but this is supernatural. It is more admirable that any are holy, than that all are not. Most men live short of the light of nature; wonder not that

so few are advanced beyond nature to the state of grace.

Piety, therefore, to natural men, is and seems to be a reasonless, uncouth, unlikely thing—a mere paradox. Tell a vulgar, unlearned man of the mystery of any art or science, he thinks you speak nonsense; he can see nothing in them, they seem unreasonable. As many mysteries as you acquaint him with, so many absurdities; he laughs at them. It is so with all *mysteries of godliness*. Propound them to a carnal man, he will laugh at them; persuade him to them, he rejects them; enforce them upon him, he repels them. It is that which St. Paul observes: "Our Gospel is hidden to those who perish" (2 Cor. iv. 3). A natural man judges these spiritual truths stark foolishness (1 Cor. ii. 14). Therefore, the mysteries of the Gospel are called *the foolishness of God* (Ibid. i. 25). God hath wrapt them all up in the veil of such mystical obscurity that, at first, they appear odd and unlikely to a carnal man. As the Ark, though it were within and without all of pure gold (Exod. xxxvii.), yet the coverings of the tabernacle (Ibid. xxxvi. 19) were plain and coarse—no outward beauty to be seen. Thus Christ, the great *mystery*, is God, veiled up in weak flesh; *How can this man save us?* The meanness of His outside scandalized the Jews; *Is not this the carpenter?* (Mark vi. 3). *They were scandalized in regard of Him.* And Christ knew how easily men would stumble at the unlikeliness of this mystery, that He pronounced him blessed "that shall not be scandalized in Him" (Matt. xi. 6). This is the reason the prophet Isaias gives why so few believe in Christ: "Who hath believed our report? He is as a root out of thirsty ground; there is no beauty in him, nor come-

liness; and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of him" (liii. 1, 2).

The doctrine of godliness, how absurd it seems to natural reason. Regeneration, to be born again and become a new man, Nicodemus cannot conceive it (John iii.). To be nourished to life by Christ's flesh; *How can this man give us his flesh to eat? this saying is hard* (John vi.). Self-denial and mortification, to be crucified to the world—a folly to nature. To hate father, mother, life itself, for religion's sake, how unreasonable—to love our enemies, to rejoice in afflictions, to know how to suffer need (Phil. iv. 12)—to part with all, in hope of gain, at the resurrection in another world; and above all, to look for salvation in a crucified Saviour; *sunt stulta Dei, sed decus fidei;* these are the mysteries of our piety, the follies and paradoxes of natural reason. "No," saith the Psalmist, "all the glory of the King's daughter is within" (Psal. xliv. 14). All the glory of Piety and the Church is spiritual and heavenly. The Spouse of Christ is beautiful but all-heavenly; clothed with the sun, crowned with the stars, treading on the moon; all Heavenly and Mystical.

The art of godliness, the skill of living holily, is no small matter, but very mysterious. The philosopher could say of his art, *ars longa, vita brevis.* A man's life was too short to attain the perfection of it. How much more is the high art of religion, *the mystery of godliness.* It makes David, for all his learning, cry out still, *Teach me, instruct, make me understand the way of godliness.* St. Paul, that great proficient, yet professes he fell short (Phil. iii. 11, 12, 13): "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, I have not already attained, I am not already perfect; but I follow af-

ter, I press forward, if by any means I may attain" —words of striving and contention.

How hard a thing it is to attain even to the knowledge of *godliness*. Then how difficult must it be to mortify the lusts and subdue the appetites. It is called a *crucifying*. Consider it, you who think seven years little enough to learn any trade of life; but any little time, any poor pains, sufficient to learn that which the saints were practicing all their days. Hurrying over a few prayers, or coming to church and following the priest, half asleep, half awake, will not make you a skilful man in this art of piety.

The mystery and the piety of Religion must go both together. The true Christian must not only content himself with the mystery of Christianity, but must acquaint himself with the *piety*. True religion joins both together. Thus St. Paul describes Christian Religion: "It is a doctrine according to godliness" (1 Tim. vi. 3), and it is called *the knowledge of the truth according to godliness* (Tit. i. 1). We may as well separate light from heat in the fire, as the mystery and knowledge of it from the piety.

Indeed, first we must get the *mystery*, then labor for the piety of it. First, God created light; so it is in man's soul. A man is sooner enlightened than sanctified. The sun enlightens in an instant, but it begets heat in the air by length of time; yet they must never be asunder. Blind devotion would have the *piety* without the *mystery*. Profane curiosity would have the *mystery* without the *piety;* understand all secrets and mysteries, comprehend all truths; but for the holiness of Christianity, they have no desire for it.

True religion is not like the tree of knowledge, only

fair to the eye and delightful to behold (Gen. iii. 6), but it must be to us as the tree of life, for devotion and practice. Religion is not placed in the upper region of the brain, but in the heart, the seat of affection, the fountain of action. It is a sanctifying truth: *Holy Father, sanctify them in truth,* not enlighten them only (John xvii. 17).

See how Christ checks curiosity and turns all to practice: "Lord, are they few that are saved? But He said to them: Strive to enter by the narrow gate" (Luke xiii. 23, 24).

Piety is the end of Christianity. It is *mysterium practicum.* Not a science in contemplation, but an art of doing; not to make us the wiser, but the holier. Piety is the best keeper of this mystery. The knowledge of religion is a precious jewel. See the cabinet St. Paul tells us of, wherein it must be kept: "Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience" (1 Tim. iii. 9). Take heed of making shipwreck of a good conscience. Knowledge in this vessel is like the manna in the golden pot: it is kept sweet. In a profane heart it is like manna in other vessels, that putrified. God takes away natural knowledge if we abuse it, and live not accordingly. When they knew God and glorified Him not as God, God gave them over to error, and did not call them to the knowledge of the Gospel (Rom. i. 21, etc.). As we try vessels first with water, if they will hold, and keep it sweet, then we pour wine into them. They who corrupt natural knowledge, God will not trust them with this *mystery.*

In all truths labor to be better. Make St. Peter's conclusion: *If these things are so, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*

We have seen the quality and condition of this mystery. It is *a mystery of godliness.* Now follows—

The infallible, undoubted certainty of this *mystery.* It is beyond *all controversy manifeste, evidently.*

It is a most grounded truth. Heaven and earth may sooner fail than the least particle of this truth. It has the power, and the truth, and the faithfulness of God; nay, His oath to establish it.

St. Paul seals up this great truth: It is *without controversy.* True faith embraces these heavenly truths with all assurance and fulness of persuasion. It is the nature and office of true faith in the matters of God, to breed all possible assurance. It is a seal. He who receives God's testimony of His Son *hath set to his seal that God is true* (John iii. 33). Philip shows the assurance of faith which He requires of the eunuch: "If thou believest with all thy heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts viii. 37). Especially in this truth, Jesus, God-incarnate, Faith breaks through all controversies, and unquestionably must believe.

First. This truth is clearly revealed in Scripture. And divine revelation is the stay and establishment of faith. Truths that are more obscurely delivered are liable to question and controversy; but this truth, that *Jesus* is the *Messias*, and the Author of Salvation, is with all evidence propounded to us. When God speaks clearly, faith believes firmly. *Credendum est Deo, vel semel loquenti.*

Second. This truth is an immediate and first principle of Religion, the grand maxim and Oracle of Divinity.

Now in all professions principles are unquestionable, admit of no gainsaying. *He that comes to God must believe.*

Third. It is a fundamental truth; the first stone that is laid in the building of the Church; the main Rock upon which the whole building rests. See when Christ builds His Church, He chooses this confession: *Thou art the Son of the living God.* He lays that in the foundation. Now, in all buildings the foundation must be sure and immovable. Here, *qui dubitat in fide, est infidelis.*

Fourth. Errors in this are most dangerous. As errors in the conception are hardly corrected, so errors in this first conception of Faith. Oh! these prime truths must be firmly and strongly embraced. In some truths we may differ, *Salva compage fidei,* but in this every error is deadly.

In some truths St. Paul's moderation is sweet; *if any man think otherwise, God will reveal it to him; account him as a brother.* But in this to him who errs St. Paul's threatening is seasonable, *You are fallen from grace; you are cut off from Christ; you must die in your sins.*

This is the defiance Faith gives to all the objections and cavils of nature. How can God become man? the Creator, a creature? a virgin conceive? *Get thee behind me, Satan, it is without all controversy.*

By this it answers and represses the contradictions of infidelity. A man's heart is hardly drawn to assent and give credit to these mysteries. No, faith tramples all under foot; it is *without all controversy.*

By this, it overcomes the weaknesses and infirmities of faith. Faith at first encounters many doubts and fears; but why do thoughts rise in my heart? I know he is a faithful and true witness; no word is impossible to Him. It is the victory and triumph that Faith gets over all doubtings; it believes steadfastly *without all controversy.*

THE REVELATION OF THE WORD INCARNATE,

AND HOW ALL CREATURES BEAR WITNESS TO HIS DIVINITY.

WE propose in this discourse to see what kind of record the voice of nature and of prophecy can give us of the Word Incarnate. The great God, whom the prophet Isaias called the hidden God, and who according to the saying of the psalmist had spread round about His throne a veil of darkness impenetrable to mortal eyes, was revealed in the crib in the first of His days. The Word Incarnate so visibly replenished the world with its knowledge that a man must be blind not to see its light, and stupid to resist its love.

The voice of nature has been willing to bear a part in the great harmony, which had manifested the Word Eternal to the world, and the increated wisdom united to the body of an infant. If we will look into the signs from heaven, at the approach of this Nativity, the sun appeared encompassed with a marvellous rainbow, willing thereby to give notice that the time of reconciliation was near, and that the great Mediator, who should reunite all things in His Person, came to sanctify the world by a universal peace ("Oros." i. 6, c. 20; "Suet. in Aug.," c. 95; "Senec." i., nat. 99; "Dio." i. 45). I might allege what was witnessed by Eutropius in his first book, and by Eusebius in his Chronicle, how

three suns were seen to shine at one time, afterward united and incorporated into one single globe, to denote three substances, viz.: the word, the soul, and the flesh united in the sole Person of our Saviour. The heaven spoke aloud, making use of a new star, as of a tongue to declare the living God, and this apparition became so famous, that even infidels had authentic testimonies thereof, as we may see in the narration of *Chalcidius*, a Platonic philosopher. And it is strange that *Pliny* himself speaks of a certain star with silver rays, infinitely resplendent, which showed God in a human figure (Plin., c. 25, l. 2).

If we speak of the air, know we not it was illumined with a great and divine light, which St. Luke called the glory of God? (ii. 9). If we speak of waters, tradition teaches us a fountain was seen to spring in a poor stable, which was honored first with the birth of the Son of God (Baronius). The earth also contributed to the revelation of the Word, when it made some of its trees bow, to adore the Saviour. The birds of the air have rendered their homage by the means of a dove which appeared in the Baptism; fishes in that, which served as a steward and cash-master to Jesus Christ (John i. 32; Matt. xvii. 26). Four-footed beasts were remarkable in the stable, because we have learned from the prophet Isaias: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib" (Isa. i.).

If we pass from the voice of nature, to voices divinely human, as are predictions; what is there more admirable than the universal consent of prophecies?

There we behold the great model of the Word Incarnate, which God placed in the frontispiece of His works to be admired and adored by all intellectual nature.

We find prophets divided one from another, the distance of many hundred years, different in age, disposition, condition, style, invention, order, and connection, who could not see one another, as were David, Daniel, and Isaias; yet all in unison foretold the history of the great Saviour of men. One speaks of His birth, another of His life, another of His doctrine, another of His manners, another of His miracles, another of His death, another of His victories and triumphs. When we consider all these predictions singly and collectively, we find them measured and fitted with such proportion as to be compelled to affirm that it is not a work of mortal hands, but a manifestation of the Spirit of God.

Who inspired the patriarch Jacob, who prophesied so many years before all prophets, that the Messias, the hope of all nations, should come, when the sceptre of Juda was taken out of the hands of Juda's race: which was fulfilled punctually in the time of Herod, the alien king who put the *true heirs of this royal line to death*, to satisfy his ambition, and content his tyranny? Who dictated to the prophet Daniel that after the edict of King Artaxerxes, granted in favor of the re-establishment of the Temple, there should be seventy weeks of years to the birth of Christ, that is to say, the space of four hundred and ninety years? which was found true by calculation of the best historians. (Read Gen. xlix. 10, and Daniel ix. 24.) Who made the prophet Aggeus speak with this thundering majesty, and worthy of the lips of the God of Hosts: "Yet one little while, and I will move the heaven, and the earth, and the sea; and I will move all nations: *and the desired of all nations shall come*" (Aggeus ii. 7, 8). "While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of

her course, Thy almighty word came down from heaven from Thy royal throne" (Wisdom xviii. 14, 15). Was it not the same Spirit, which afterward wrought those great mysteries we see; who then showed them to His faithful servants? It was He that guided the pen of Isaias, when he proclaimed the Messias should be born of a Virgin; He who revealed to the prophet *Micheas* this birth should happen in Bethlehem (v. 2); He who opened the eyes of Zachary to see Him in the triumphal entrance He afterward made into Jerusalem; He who deciphered to David all the particulars of His passion in the twenty-first Psalm. This great consent of prophets without design or art, astonished the Jews, who had the Scriptures in their hands, and could reckon up all the verses of their Bible. They well saw, it was the uncontrollable voice of prophets; but their vanity had so blinded them that they rather wished to have no Messias than to acknowledge Him poor according to the world; although His very poverty had been reckoned by the prophets in the number of His greatnesses.

But who will not be rapt with admiration to consider the words, which the wisest, the greatest, and most glorious of Gentilism left to posterity, concerning this mystery? I speak of *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Cicero*. How came that into Plato's mind which he so eloquently afterward couched in the fourth book of his laws? To wit: "That God should be to men the rule and measure of all things, and principally if it were so, or ought to be so in any part of the world, that there were a Man-God" (Plato, lib. 4, de legibus). From whence think you came it, that Aristotle let this word fall: "That it was no unbeseeming thing for the gods immor-

tal to revest themselves with human nature, to destroy the errors which had crept into the world?" Who suggested to Cicero, one of the wisest statesmen that ever were amongst men, what he wrote in his book of commonwealth? "That the time would come, there should be no other law at Rome than at Athens: but that amongst all nations, and in all times, there should be one same, eternal, and immutable law, one common master, and emperor over all, which should be God Himself, the inventor, teacher, and introducer of this law: and that he who obeyed Him not, should fly from himself, as a despiser of his own nature. But in this alone that he would not obey, he were grievously chastised although he might escape all other punishments" (Cic. i. 3, de rep.).

Virgil, the most eminent of all poets, composed his excellent work, where he expresses in Latin verse the conceptions of *Sybilla Cumæa*, and speaks plainly of a child which should be sent from heaven to pardon sins of men, and fill the earth with blessings. And to show this was not alone in the minds of particulars, we read that toward the reign of *Augustus*, *Julius Marathus* having foretold that nature should bring forth a King for the world's empire, the senate was so amazed, according to *Suetonius*, the historian, that they forbade to bring up children which should be born within the time this soothsayer had prefixed (Sueto. in Aug. 54). And Josephus also makes mention of the prediction: *Nations come from Judea should become masters of the universe* (Josephus l. 7, c. 1, de bello Judaico).

Porphyry, yea, Mahomet, and demons themselves gave some eulogy of honor to Jesus. Porphyry in the treatise he made of the blessings of philosophy, says:

"It is a great matter that devils themselves have spoken in favor of Jesus, confessing Him to be endowed with singular piety, for which cause He entered into possession of most happy immortality." And Mahomet, that the Spirit of God bore record to Christ, the Son of Mary, that the soul of God was given Him; that He is the Messenger, Spirit, and Word of God; that His doctrine is perfect, and enlightens the Old Testament (Alcoran). O God of the universe, how powerful is verity to derive testimonies in favor of His word from the very lips of the most profane!

Where is that darkness which can hinder the bright day of faith? What can infidels say? That this mystery of the Word Incarnate is impossible? Impossible, how? Either on God's part or man's, or from the repugnance of human understanding to such like propositions, because in their very enunciation they involve contraditions. How would it not be possible to God, He being Omnipotent, Immense, Infinite? How would He who, according to the confession of ancient philosophers, can replenish all the world with His Divinity, not be able to accommodate Himself with enough of it to divinize His holy Humanity? Is it because we say it is united to the Word in this mystery in a quite other fashion than the Spirit of God is with the world? I admit it; for the union of it is truly personal. But must it not be confessed of the Word in His divine essence that under title of efficient cause, He hath an influence infinite over all the effects of the world, and that under title of final cause He hath a capacity to limit and measure all the inclinations of creatures; and therefore under title of substantial bound, He may confine and accomplish by His personality all possible essence? Why shall we tie the

hands of Divine bounty in its communications, since it binds not our understanding in its conceptions? Is it not a shameful thing that man will estimate and set a limit to divine Omnipotence? If God please not man He shall not be God. Should we say man is incapable of this communication? And how is it that the holy humanity resisted the omnipotency of God to the prejudice of his own exaltation, since it is found as soon in the union of the Word as in the possession of essence? See we not in nature that the rays of the sun draw up vapors from the earth, and incorporated with them, do create meteors in the air, not one making resistance to its exaltation? What contradiction can there be in our understanding against this union of God with man? seeing the most famous philosopher said this union of God with man might be very fit, and Plutarch also speaking of the Creator's communication with the creature, said: That God was not a lover of birds nor of other living creatures, but a lover of men; and that it is a very reasonable matter that He communicate Himself to His loves and delights.

But this would seem to abase the divinity. "I wonder," said Volusianus, "that He, to whom this whole universe is so small, can be shut up within the body of a little child, having a mouth open to cries, as other."

What uncomeliness is there if God be united to a little body? Have not Pliny and Seneca said that nature was never so admirable as in little bodies, and that it was a slavery in great ones to be unable to be little? "I wonder the Sovereign Lord of all things is so long absent from heaven, and that all the government of the world is transferred to so little a creature." From whence proceeds this amazement but from the baseness

of our thoughts? If we said that God being made man, ceased to be God, and was despoiled of His empire and greatness, there would be some reason wherewith to question this mystery; but when we say God came to man by inclination of a sovereign bounty and mercy, not leaving Himself; when we say human nature is received into the Word, as a small source into a huge river, and not losing its essence, is fixed upon the personality of the Word itself, is it not to honor the power, majesty, and wisdom of God?

In what were the divinity abased? Can it be in doing a work so noble, so singular, so divine, that it deserves to entertain the thoughts of men and angels through time and eternity?

What dignity to behold in the world a man-God become a part of the world, to possess the Spirit of God from all eternity, the first-born of all creatures, who held all ages in breath for Him, all hearts in desire, all minds in expectation, all creatures in prophecies? "In the head of God's book it is written of me" (Psalm xxxix. 8).

All creatures of this great universe, all predictions and conceptions of these two great books, the world and the Bible, tended to the accomplishment and revelation of this God-man, who should set a golden head upon all nature, intelligent, sensitive, and vegetative. All creatures were but leaves and flowers that promised the great fruit which the prophet calls the fruit of earth sublime (Isaias iv. 2).

"It is for this incomparable man that God created the world; and all creatures are but as silly rays from the diadem of glory which covereth His head" (Rupert, "de glo. Trinit.").

What a spectacle to see them all wound up as the strings of a harp, to praise and declare unto men the name of God; to behold the nine choirs of angels enter into this consort; and notwithstanding their many and godlike perfections, all confess their ability cannot reach that degree which the Divine greatness merits. And behold here the Word Incarnate, which encircling all the spheres of nature, grace, and glory, manifests the new sphere of the hypostatical union, where it appears as a rainbow imprinted with all the beauties of the Father; He manifests them to men, and making Himself an adoring God, a loving God, an honorable God, through all ages for ever and ever.

Let us unfold our hearts in the knowledge and love of the Word revealed. Let us adore this great sign, this eternal character of the living God. Let us make a firm purpose not to pass over a day of our life, wherein we afford Him not three things due to Him: Homage, Love, and Imitation. Homage, by adoring Him, and offering Him some small service directed according to times, in acknowledgment of the dependence we have of Him, by an entire conformity of our will to His; Love, by loving all He loves, and hating all He hates; Imitation, by ever bearing some mark of Him upon our flesh, according to the apostle's precept, who said: *Glorify and bear God upon your body.* And to conclude let us often say: Feed, O Lord, Thy poor servant with continual influences of Thy divinity. I ask and desire with all my heart Thy love may penetrate, replenish, and transform me wholly into Thee.

THE SUPERLATIVE EMINENCE AND ADVANCEMENT GAINED BY THE CHRISTIAN THROUGH CHRIST'S INCARNATION AND BIRTH, EXPRESSED IN THREE REMARKABLE PARTICULARS, AN ARGUMENT OF ITS DIVINITY.

The world had subsisted about four thousand years, when Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, having taken human flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and being made man, was born of her for the redemption of mankind, or, as St. Paul expresses it: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent His Son made of a woman, made under the law; that He might redeem them who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galat. iv. 4, 5).

This day is to be remembered in our generations. For this day Christ came and *redeemed us that lay under the law*. We were condemned men. Neither the captivity of Egyptians nor that of Babylon can be compared to ours. The Apostle sets out unto us the happy condition that hath betided the Church of God by the coming of Christ in His Incarnation. And he expresses it, *first*, by a comparative opposition to the state of the Church before Christ's coming; *second*, by a positive, or rather superlative illustration of the happy condition of the Church, by His coming among us.

In respect of age, the Church of the Jews before Christ, was a child in knowledge, weak, imperfect, unskilful. *In respect of condition*, it was a slave, for their spirit was the spirit of fear and bondage; our spirit is the spirit of love and liberty. *In respect of education*, it was at the command and under the institution of a

hard schoolmaster, the law—badly instructed, having but a faint knowledge of the first elements and rudiments of our religion. This sad condition of the Jewish Church should make us look into the sad and forlorn state of us Gentiles and heathens (for such was our origin). The Jews were babes and children; our condition was worse. We were not so much as servants, but nearly all strangers, rebels, castaways, enemies of God. Were they kept under inferior teachers —we were far worse, untaught, ignorant, without understanding, without God in the world.

The Christian Church has gained a superlative eminence over the Jewish Church by Christ's Incarnation. And this benefit we gain by Him is expressed in three remarkable particulars. The first thing remarkable in this great benefit is the *Time* when it was performed; *when the fulness of the time was come.* The second thing remarkable is the accomplishment of it, viz., 1, the Author of it, *God;* 2, the Actor of it, *His Son;* 3, the assurer of it, the *Holy Ghost* (verse 6). All three persons of the glorious Trinity, as they concurred in our creation, so do they join and meet in the accomplishment of our redemption. The third thing remarkable is the end and fruit we gain by it—1, a *freedom from misery;* that is the benefit of redemption; *that He might redeem us;* 2, the advancing to happiness by the benefit of adoption: *that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Christ did not come presently after the fall of Adam, but stayed and deferred His coming for various reasons. By delaying medicine the disease is aggravated. By the delay of Christ's coming the fall and disease of sin became more observable and the cure proved more re-

markable. Had man been restored to grace as soon as he had forfeited it, he would not have been sufficiently sensible of the depth of his horrible wounds; neither would the infinite mercy, power, and goodness of God, in saving him, have appeared in so great lustre.

Christ would not go at the first call to cure Lazarus, but stayed *two days*, that he might be sick, and die, and be buried, and putrified, that the case of Lazarus might seem more desperate; so God let the world lie and continue in that ruin, that sin might appear out of measure sinful.

In the course of nature a wound is sooner given than it can be cured again; and in the dispensation of grace God takes longer time for punishing and pardoning than we take for sinning: "According to the number of the days; a year shall be counted for a day, and for forty years you shall receive your iniquities" . . . . (Numb. xiv. 34). The sin of spies and people was but forty days' continuance, but they felt the smart of that sin full forty years. This course God took with the world (Rom. xi. 33).

After God had promised Christ, many hundred years were spent ere He performed His promise. The law came between, and it was added, *because of transgressions, until the Seed should come.* The world was to look for a Saviour, but in the meantime the law was set over them, to convince them of sin; to make them know it is an evil and a bitter thing to fall away from God; and then comes the Saviour. Christ came not presently in the beginning of Time, that so the perfection of the Church might grow by degrees, till it came to the full age and measure of Christ. The Church was first as a child in the minority; much time to pass over

it, till it came to perfection. It is compared, 1, to a building; that is, a leisurely, slow work. A house or a city is not built in a day. First the foundation, then the walls, then after that lay on the roof. It is compared, 2, to husbandry, and sowing of seed. It is not *heri sementis, and hodie messis*, to-day seed-time, and to-morrow harvest; but first the blade, then the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear; then comes the harvest (Mark iv.). It was sown in promises, sprung up in prophecies, bloomed in types and figures; then came the full ear and harvest in Christ's Incarnation. The joy of that time is the joy of harvest (Isaias ix. 3). The improvement of the Church is compared, 3, to the growth of a man (Ephes. iv.). Now of all creatures, the growth of a man is most leisurely; he comes slowest on to perfection. When you put a child to school, you place him not in the highest form, enter him not into the deepest mysteries of learning at first, but begin him at lower: so God first placed the Church *sub lege naturæ*, trained them up in rudiments revealed in a simpler manner; then brings in the *Pædagogia* of Moses, sets him to nurture and tutor them in types and figures, then brings in Christ, the great Prophet and Doctor of the Church, that sanctified and saved the primitive saints, as the last upon earth shall be saved by Him.

That we may conceive how our Saviour's coming brought a *fulness* to Time, we must know there were foregoing times, in which Christ was made known to the Church; but yet there was an emptiness in those times; His Birth and Incarnation gave a *fulness* to them.

There were three preparative foregoing times, which

Christ's coming fulfilled: 1. The time from Adam to Moses was *Tempus promissionis*. The Church of God lived and supported itself with that promise; that afterward, in God's good time, Christ should be born. Now promises are all for hereafter. They give us assurance, but put us not in possession. A man may be rich in bills, and bonds, and specialties, but be in actual want. But Christ's coming fulfilled those promises. 2. The time of Church under Moses was, *Tempus Typorum*. It added to the former time which had but a promise of the Messias. But these fall short of fulness. Seals and pledges are good assurances, but actual possession is a great deal better. They were but shadows of the things to come, but the body is of Christ (Col. ii. 17). 3. *Tempus Prophetiarum*, the age of the prophets—that was yet a fuller time, for they foretold the very manner and circumstances connected with His Birth and Incarnation. Isaias foretells the time; Micheas foretells the city—Bethlehem; all fall short of this fulness. The coming of Christ is the fulness of time.

God sent His Son. So here are three things to be considered: 1, the Author, *God*: 2, His action, *He sent*: 3, *His Son* is the person who must effect and perform this Redemption for us.

God the Father must be the Author of our redemption, because by special appropriation He is the Author of our creation; and none other must redeem us but He who creates us. We were His by right of creation, and that was an indefeasible right. Though we by sin lost our right in God, yet God did not lose His right in us. Now redemption belongs to Him, to whom belongs the original right of possession. The stray lost

sheep was the Shepherd's still; He only had the right to recover it. None but God could lay claim to us, and therefore none but God could redeem us. Had any but God achieved our redemption, more glory had been due to a creature for redeeming us than to God for creating us. The work of redemption is far more glorious than the work of creation. In it shines more glorious wisdom, goodness, power.

We owe more for our redemption than for our creation. Before God made us, we were nothing; before He redeemed us, we were worse than nothing. We owe greater thanks to Him who redeemed us by His Son's Blood than to Him who created us only by His breath.

We have seen the Author of redemption: Let us see the Actor of it. Christ was sent to work our redemption. He who was *sent*, was before He was *sent* (John xvi. 28): "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and I go to the Father." "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning" (Prov. viii. 22). There is His eternal generation. But He rejoiced to be in the habitable parts of the earth; He delighted to be with the sons of men: There was His voluntary and gracious *sending*, in His Incarnation. Though He was at Bethlehem, yet His going forth *is* "from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Micheas v. 2). He came to save that which was lost (Matt. xviii. 11). Now, surely He will not frustrate the main end of His Nativity. Christ came, and yet His *Father sent Him;* it is *actus mutui consensus.* He came, and so it was His own act; and His *Father sent* Him, so it was His Father's act. Both joined, and agreed in this work of our salvation. Indeed, the *Father* and the *Son*

always do the same things; but yet more expressly their consent is observable in our redemption. The Scripture makes it a matter of their counsel and consultation; a matter of covenant and compact between the *Father* and the *Son*. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance" (Psal. ii. 8). "In the volume of Thy book, it was written of me: then said I, Behold, I come; I delight to *do* Thy will, O my God" (Psal. xxxix. 8, 9). Both concurred; He came not of Himself, but His Father sent Him to redeem us. He came with ample commission to effect this work. And Christ published this commission at His first preaching: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore He hath anointed me, to preach the Gospel to the poor He hath sent me, to heal the contrite of heart; to preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke iv. 18, 19). "The Father who sent me gave me commandment" (John xii. 49). *Him hath God the Father sealed, set Him up to be the Prince and Author of salvation.*

Christ comes with full authority to negotiate and transact the work of our redemption. St. Paul terms Him the *Apostle and High-Priest of our confession* (Heb. iii.). He had apostolical commission from God to effect it. It must teach us perfectly to trust in Him, and to commend the care of our salvation into His hands, whom God hath laid this office upon, to solicit our salvation.

Our going to God, as St. Chrysostom notes is not called in Scripture *πρόσοδος*, but *προσαγωγὴ*; He fetched us, and brought us, we went not of ourselves; *non motu nostro, sed ductu suo.* "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live

by Him. In this charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10). He sent to us when none of us ever thought of sending to Him. Did we ever think of this means of salvation? No; the whole world either lay in security, never minding nor considering our woful condition, or else we were up in hostility; so far from sending for peace that we were bidding defiance to Him, practicing enmity. Or we were sunk in despair, not daring to think any thought of pardon, expecting nothing but destruction; and then He graciously thought upon us, and *sent* for our deliverance. God sent His Son, sending, it is *actus demissionis;* an act of great vouchsafing, of much condescension: for God to send to us, to dispatch messengers, begin treaties, make offers of reconciliation, nay, to beseech us to be reconciled; admirable dignity! Why should He seek and *send*, and sue to us for peace and atonement? He is *fortior;* all the strength is on His side. Now, Christ tells us (Luke xiv. 31) that, in case of enmity, he who finds himself the weaker should send embassies, and desire conditions of peace. Alas! we are infinitely the weaker, not able to annoy Him, or grapple with Him. St. Paul gives us this item: "When as yet we were weak, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 6).

He is *dignior;* that is a second advantage on His side; far above us in all honor and dignity. One would think the more mean and inferior should *send* and seek, and sue to his better, if he had offended him. What saith Elizabeth to the Virgin Mary: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke i. 43). What condescension is this, that the High and the Holy One should send to us in our base condition?

He makes Himself lower than the lowest by this condescension, says St. Chrysostom.

He is *pars læsa;* that is a third advantage He hath against us. The injury and wrong is done to Him, the offence committed by us. Reason would, that we who had wronged Him should come in first, and sue to Him, as *Semei*, because he had wronged David, came first of all his tribe and country to meet King David, and to make his peace with him. All the right is on God's side, and yet He sends to us.

He is *independens*, *Αὐταρκής;* his self-sufficiency needs not our friendship and reconciliation. Amongst men, we must sometimes endure wrongs, and pass by them; we may stand in need of those who now offend us. *Nec possum tecum vivere, nec sine te.* Superiors may have such use of their inferiors that they must be glad to seek them. *The head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee.* But God stands not in need of us, or of our service. Had we all perished in our rebellion, He had lost nothing. Eliphaz tells us: "Can man be compared with God, even though he were of perfect knowledge? What doth it profit God if thou be just?" (Job xxii. 2, 3). No; had we all perished, He had His holy angels to serve Him; nay, had they all revolted, His glory and happiness are included in Himself, and noways depend upon the service of His creatures. God gives Abraham an item of this when He made His covenant with him: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect, and I will make my covenant with thee" (Gen. xvii.). It was not necessity, but mercy, to covenant with Abraham.

Yet see! He abates this, and all other advantages: Though He be the stronger, and need not fear us;

though He be the better, and so may despise us; though He be wronged by us, and so may expect submission from us; though He hath not the least need of us, and so may neglect us forever; yet see His wonderful vouchsafing and condescending, He *sends* to us.

We may well break out with David's admiration: *Who am I, O Lord God?* (2 Kings vii. 18). Would one man thus deal with another? stoop so low, to such treaties and entreaties of reconciliation? *send* and solicit, and importune for agreement? Nay, verily, it is the unmatchable example of God's love to us, thus *to send* His Son to accomplish our peace and reconciliation.

HISTORICAL AND MYSTICAL CHARACTER OF OUR SAVIOUR'S TRANSFIGURATION.

"And it came to pass about eight days after these words, that He took Peter, James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray." —ST. LUKE ix. 28.

SECTION I.

THIS passage of Scripture is a remarkable relation of our Saviour's glorious Transfiguration; His laying aside His garments of frailty and mortality, and His assuming to Himself His robes of majesty and glory. As David, seeing his son Solomon's succession questioned and opposed, sends him to Mount Gihon, commands Sadoc and Nathan to anoint and proclaim him king: so here, Christ's kingdom being opposed, He is by God's appointment established. Moses and Elias adore and attend Him, and a voice from heaven declares Him the *Messias*.

To make the triumphs of kings more magnificent, all necessary preparations are made on a certain day, and at a suitable place with honorable attendants. So, here, in Christ's triumph every particular is marked out to advance the glory of His Transfiguration. First, is the choice of time—*about eight days after these words;* second, is the choice of attendants—*Peter*, *James*, and *John;* third, is the choice of place fit for this great work—*a mountain;* fourth, is the choice of a holy

preparation—*Prayer: He went up into a mountain to pray.*

After these words, that is, after the profession of St. Peter's faith (verse 20), Thou art *the Christ of God*, He was transfigured. The faith of Peter was confirmed by the Transfiguration and rewarded by its glorious vision.

The ground of *faith* is not sight and reason and evidence; but the reward of *faith* is evidence and clearness of full representation. Christians are called *fideles, credentes, non rationales* (St. Augustine). To believe because we see, is the weakness of faith; but to see because we believe, is the honor of faith. *Aliud est videndo credere, aliud credendo videre.*

After the prediction of His death (verse 22), *The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the ancients and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day rise again.* After that *saying* then He was transfigured. He showed His glory. He who can thus assume a state of immortality hath no inward necessity to die. It was not necessity of nature, but dispensation of grace that exposed Him to death. As Moses died, not of weakness, *his eye was not dim*, nor his natural force abated (Deut. xxxiv. 7), but upon special order, so died Christ. As it was his strength, not his weakness, that ended Samson; so Christ died, *clamore magno, non singultu.* He did not expire with a sigh, or a groan, but when "He had cried with a loud voice, He yielded up the ghost" (Matt. xxvii. 50). Christ did not die from any external violence. He who hath the title of the *Lord of life*, and can assume to Himself *impassibility*, what violence can assault or annoy Him? "No man taketh away my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it

down, and I have power to take it up again" (John x. 18). He who can pass through the midst of them, and go His way (Luke iv. 30), surely His death is not enforced, but assumed.

He did not die because His Father hated Him. It may be it shall be said, *God hath forsaken Him;* His Father's displeasure exposes Him. No, that scandal is prevented by this glorious manifestation of Himself. He is by an oracle from heaven honored, and acknowledged the Son of His Father's love.

After His death is foretold His glory is discovered. He did not pass *à deliciis ad delicias.* No, but first He must suffer and then be glorified. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" (Luke xxiv. 26). First, Mount Calvary must be ascended, then Thabor, and Olivet. *Post fel favum.* He must taste the gall of His Passion, then, after, He shall taste the honeycomb of the sweetness of exaltation.

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" (Acts xxvi. 8). He hath power to lay it down and power to take it up again. Look upon Mount Thabor, and this Transfiguration; and then go to Golgotha, and doubt not of a Resurrection. Consider the glory of the Transfiguration, and then doubt not of the *immortality*, *impassibility*, *agility*, *clarity* of the *Resurrection.*

When Christ made mention of His kingdom (verse 27), "I tell you of a truth: There are some standing here that shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God,"—they never heard of Christ's kingdom, but they imagined a terrestrial outward kingdom. Christ, to make them understand the condition of His king-

dom, withdraws their thoughts from outward things, shows them the spiritual, supernatural, celestial nature of His kingdom. *Jerusalem* comes down from heaven. All outward things are the good things of His footstool, not the good things of His Throne; the comforts of the miserable, not the joys of the blessed.

About eight days after; St. Matthew and St. Mark say six days; St. Luke here eight. St. Matthew and St. Mark speak exclusively, leaving out the day of this prediction, and of the Transfiguration, and mention the six days intervening. St. Luke speaks comprehensively, reckons both the day he spoke it, and the day he performed it, and so makes up eight. Eight days has a *moral* and *mystical* signification. He remains eight days to stir up expectation, as moderate delays sharpen and quicken our hope and expectations. *Eight days* has a mystical signification: *First.* It is the mystery of Christ's Resurrection. He was transfigured on the eighth day, that is raised in glory on the eighth day afterward. This reason St. Augustine gives why the number eight is consecrated in Scripture: The circumcision was on the eighth day to figure Christ's Resurrection. Many legal offerings were on the eighth day. Thus St. Augustine descants upon some titles of the Psalms in Octavis, all prefigurations of Jesus Christ's Resurrection. *Secondly.* It is the mystery of our Transfiguration and Resurrection. Six ages of the world must pass first. *Post sex dies gloria Dominicæ habitus ostenditur. Sex millium annorum temporibus evolutis Regni Cœlestis honos præfiguratur* (St. Hilary). Six ages, the world's continuance; the seventh day, that's the day of Judgment; then the eighth is *die æternitatis,* when we shall be taken up in glory.

The choice of attendants are His disciples: *Peter*, *James*, and *John;* why not the people, the priests, and Pharisees? It was a revelation, and revelations of mysteries are not for infidels, but for believers. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. xii. 11). For common illumination, He enlightens every man, but special revelation is the *children's bread, the hidden manna.* He expounded all to His disciples apart. As every subject may know the king's laws, but his choice counsellors are only acquainted with his secrets; so the Law of God is exposed to all; but the mysteries of His kingdom are concealed from many, and communicated only to His own.

Jesus Christ, in His divine economy, saw the necessity of carrying secretly His divinity, in the dark-lantern of His humanity, thus to make way for His death and Passion. *Had they known the Lord of life and glory they would not have crucified Him.* Hence He charges them not to publish it till after His Passion. Thus the greatest Rabbins never conceived how David's Son could be David's Lord, and, therefore, the Jews to this day, because in some places they find predictions of Divinity, sometimes of humanity, not knowing how to accord them, imagine two Christs; Filium Joseph, He that shall suffer, and die; Filium David, He that shall rule and reign.

It was a revelation of the saints, because Christ after His Resurrection never showed Himself but to the saints. Before, He did to priests, publicans, and Pharisees: after, never but to saints; so in this act of glory only to His disciples. Only St. Paul saw Christ and heard Him; they who were in His company did not see Him

(Acts ix.). How then concerning Satan, can he see God? never, he appeared because God observed him, not that he saw God,—*none shall see Him and live;* it is true spiritually, *none shall see Him and die.*

Tres discipuli, non omnes. Three of His disciples, not all. Three is a sufficient number to testify this miracle.

Judas, a reprobate, was not to be admitted, he was unworthy of it. Therefore, lest he should murmur, and repine and grow worse, others are left out. Why does our Blessed Lord single out Peter, James, and John, and pass by the other disciples? He excludes all others at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and admits these. What reasons are there for it? There need be no reason, it is His pleasure. He can cross His hands as Jacob did, give five portions to Benjamin, deal more sparingly with others. *Shall I not do with mine own as I please?* These three were more eminent for grace, and zeal and love to Christ. St. Paul says, they were counted *Pillars.* These three were admitted to His Transfiguration, because they were appointed to assist at His Passion (Matt. xxvi. 37). *Peter* was that zealous disciple who made the noble confession of Christ, therefore he is singled out to partake of this *vision.* St. Peter is sorry to hear of Christ's death, dissuades Him from it; by this vision, therefore, he is comforted, reformed, instructed in the mystery of Christ's Death and Passion. *James* was appointed to be the first apostle that should die for Christ. Herod sucked his blood. As they who must be in the front of the battle, have the choicest armor, because they are to undertake desperate services, so St. James was to be first in the army of Christ, therefore he was admitted to view the glory of the Transfiguration. *St. John* was appointed the penman of

Christ's Divinity, and above all the others, soared highest into heaven. Therefore, was this manifestation of Christ's glory and divinity made to him. "He saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father" (John i. 14). So St. Peter makes use of this (2 Peter i. 18), "We heard a voice which came from heaven when we were on the holy mount." Thus these agreements show why these three were chosen.

The choice of place was a *mountain*. *He led them up to a mountain.* The general opinion is that Thabor is the place referred to; although interpreters are divided as to what mountain was this. Some say it was Mount Sinai, where the Law was given. Others say, it was Mount Lebanus. Christ's recourse to the mountain was very frequent. "He went up into a mountain to preach" (Matt. vi.). "He went up to the mountain to pray" (Mark vi. 46). "He went out into a mountain to pray" (Luke vi. 12). He ascended to heaven from a mountain. He appointed Abraham to offer up Isaac on a mountain. The Law was given on a mountain. Moses saw God's glory on the mountain. Elias prayed on Mount Carmel; Moses died on a mountain; so Aaron.

Why so? *Is God the God of the mountains, not of the valleys?* No, surely. In all places prayers are alike acceptable. Why then does Christ single out a mountain for prayer? 1. For retirement and privacy, He withdraws Himself from tumults and multitudes, sequesters Himself to a more intimate devotion. Retirement and solitude is a blessed opportunity for devotion. Christ bids them enter into their closet to re-collect their thoughts. 2. The elevation of the mountain, a bodily ascent, teaches us to raise our thoughts in prayer above the sphere of the world. Prayer is *as-*

census mentis ad Deum; the scale and ladder to get up to heaven. We must mount up as eagles; climb as Jonathan and his armor-bearer to the top of this rock. Devout prayer mounts the soul up, transports it into heaven. It makes our conversation to be in heaven. 3. *Mons typus cœli.* Heaven is prefigured and compared to a mountain. "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?" (Ps. xxiii. 3). "I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me" (Ibid. cxx. 1). The Temple, the type of heaven, was erected on a mountain. Mountains are places of strength, so is heaven. The aspect of that goodly frame should raise our thoughts to heaven. Thus David, viewing the heavens, breaks forth into admiration of God: *Cœli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum.* "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Ps. xviii.).

SECTION II.

Having seen our Saviour's solemn preparation for His Transfiguration (verse 28), we come now to the actual entrance and manifestation of this His glory. And, *whilst He prayed, He was transfigured.*

Christ knew that the adoration of angels and saints belonged to God alone, and as man He Himself was inferior to Him; therefore, He prayed to do honor to His eternal Father—not out of any necessity on His own part, because prayer could not sanctify Him, who was already sanctified from His Incarnation. Prayer is our moral, and real, and spiritual sacrifice, enjoined on

us by the law of nature, in recognition of the Supreme Lord of the universe. *Christ* was not sanctified by prayer, but prayer was sanctified by *Christ;* as baptism did not sanctify Him, but He sanctified and consecrated it.

God gave His beloved Son to us as our model, that, by His meritorious actions, we may be sanctified and redeemed. And when the natural Son of God, free from all the infirmities and temptations of our nature, carefully and religiously honored God, what should be our homage, who are the lowest and meanest and unworthiest of His creatures? He who in His Deity was equal to God, yet bows and prostrates Himself: how should we humble ourselves in this holy adoration? Must the Son of God be a petitioner, and shall the servant intermeddle, serve himself in his desires without prayer? "Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost part of the earth for thy possession" (Psal. ii. 8).

The efficacy of prayer is manifested in the Transfiguration—*whilst He prayed, He was transfigured.* Moses prayed on the Mount in communion with God; his face was shining and glorious—as after a man has been long conversant in some fragrant place, his very clothes will carry those perfumes with him. St. Paul, praying, was carried up into the third heaven. St. Peter, praying, was cast into a trance; St. John was ravished in spirit. Our Saviour prayed, and His glorious Transfiguration followed—"and His face did shine as the sun" (Matt. xvii. 2). He did *not* transfigure Himself, but He was transfigured. His Humanity had no activity to infuse this glory; that was but a lantern, which gives no light of itself; a candle within it must shine and enlighten it. It was the

action of God the Father, putting honor and glory upon His Son; and not so much the action of the Son assuming glory to Himself: *Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.* The merits were the Son's; the rewards, His Father's. The substance of the body was not changed, but there was rather a glorious alteration in the appearance and qualities of His body: *Assumpsit gloriam, not deposuit naturam* (Hieronymus). It was the same body of Christ, in nature and substance, *before*, and *in*, and *after* glorification. His natural body was not abolished, but only replenished with glory. *Ubiquitarians* (a school of Lutheran divines) say that the body of Christ must be present in the Eucharist, in virtue of His divine omnipresence, as it must be everywhere by virtue of union and glorification. Catholics say by virtue of glorification it may be anywhere, in a thousand places at once; thus in the sacrament of the Eucharist. For the demonstration of this truth: Christ's body, after His Ascension, was in heaven, at the right hand of God in glory, and at the same time on earth, as He was seen by St. Paul.

Our hope is that these our earthly bodies shall, in His good time, be transfigured, and made like His glorious body. Anabaptists dream of new bodies being made. No; what He hath shown in His own, He can and will perform in ours. *Our vile bodies shall be made like His glorious body.* His glorified body was *primitiæ*, the first-fruits, and they are pledges of the whole crop.

"His face did shine as the sun" (Matt. xvii. 2). The sun is the most glorious creature to which we may compare the glorified body of Jesus; not but that all created glory, all excellencies, were surpassed by His sacred body now glorified in heaven. If our blessed Redeem-

er had shone in His full glory, the eyes of the apostles could not have beheld it. *He dwells in that light that no eye can approach unto.*

All light in our system flows from the sun. The moon and the planets shine by a borrowed light. So Christ, as God, is the origin and fountain of glory. All saints and angels shine by the light they receive from Him. The light of the sun is most refulgent. The moon is waterish, the stars glimmering; but the sun is most pure. So Christ is not only pure, but purity itself. No mixture or shadow of darkness or corruption is in Him. There are spots in the moon, so there are dregs of humanity even among Christians. *The heavens are not pure in His sight* (Job xv. 15). The light of the sun enlivens and quickens, and gives vivacity to all creatures. Philosophers say, without the influence of the sun no creature can live; this being eclipsed, all things languish. In its departure there is nothing but fading and dying; in its return it gives vivacity. So Christ is the fountain of spiritual and glorious life. "The Sun of Justice shall arise, and health is in His wings" (Malachias iv. 2). The light of the sun is cheering and comforting. So Christ refreshes, gladdens the soul; "the light of His countenance is upon us," and puts "gladness in my heart" (Psal. iv. 7). The Church in her persecutions prays for that heavenly light: *Show Thy face, and we shall be saved* (Psal. lxxix. 20).

"His garments became white as snow" (Matt. xvii. 2); "Exceeding white as snow" (Mark ix. 2).

It may be asked, why are His garments glorious? A glorified body shall have no other garments than the robes of immortality and glory. But Christ was not in *statu gloriæ*, but only *in actu*, in transient passage of

glory. Not in the fulness of glory, but in some resemblance. In heaven He clothes Himself *with light as with a garment;* now He clothes Himself with garments as with light. Whence arose this glory of His garments? From the glory and resplendency that was in His Body. His divinity conveyed glory into His Soul; His Soul transfused it into His Body; and that transmits it into His garments; as His power of miracles was originally in His Godhead, then in His Soul, then in His Body, then in His garment. The hem of His garment had virtue in it, being *instrumentum conjunctum.*

Look upon all the beauties that are in the world, the most glorious and resplendent creatures, and unite all their excellencies, and raise up your thoughts by them, and from them to the contemplation of that glory which is in heaven. View all the rarities of Nature and Art,—they are but a vanishing meteor compared to the glory of heaven. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 9). He appeared before them in glory to demonstrate the truth of His divinity; they had seen His Humanity, now His glory gives evidence of His divine nature.

How can this glory of His face prove His divinity, seeing Moses' face did shine? Moses' face did shine extrinsically by conferring with God; but Christ's glory came from within from His Deity to His Soul. Christ's shinings were the *rays of His divinity*, Moses had *splendorem sub velamento;* Christ had *velamen in splendore.* Moses' shining was terrible, Christ's was comfortable; the apostles were loth to lose sight of it.

One design of the transfiguration undoubtedly was,

to give the disciples some idea of Christ's future appearance, when He should come in His kingdom. He was transfigured to prefigure the glory of His second coming at the day of Judgment; then He will have His saints about Him, as Moses, and Elias, and His Apostles to be present with Him, and He Himself will be in His glory. His first coming was in infirmity, but the kingdom of God shall come with power. Look upon Mount Thabor and then believe the glory of His second appearance. Christ was transfigured to show the possibility, nay, the facility of His own and our resurrection. He who can transform Himself thus into glory, how easily can He raise up Himself, and us also, and translate us into glory. Look upon Mount Thabor, and then doubt not but Mount Golgotha shall give up her dead.

The apostles were grieved when our Lord told them of His Cross and sufferings—to remove the scandal of His Cross He arrays Himself in glory. This Face that shall be smitten, I can make it as the sun; this Body that is to be tortured, shall shine as light; these garments that are to be parted shall be made resplendent. Look to Mount Thabor and be not offended at Mount Calvary. Let us often lift up our eyes to the holy mount, the heavenly Thabor that awaits us. Let us fix our meditations upon the glorified Jesus in heaven, attended not only by Moses and Elias, but by myriads of angels and saints. Let us labor for heaven, for the Lord has prepared thrones, crowns, and white robes for us in Paradise. "The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43).

SECTION III.

CHRIST'S HONORABLE ATTENDANTS, MOSES AND ELIAS.

All the legions of angels and saints in heaven were ambitious to celebrate the glorious Transfiguration of Christ; yet two only were admitted, and why this small number? Moses and Elias came not only as our Lord's attendants, but also to give testimony to the Son of God. Two witnesses of so great authority are sufficient to assure us of Christ's divinity. "*At the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand*" (Deut. xix. 15). Here, therefore, only three from earth are assumed to this vision, and two only from heaven. Hereafter *every eye shall see Him;* now the sight of Him is more reserved and mystical, and of a more reserved dispensation. Others are omitted to show us that even in heaven there is a diversity of glory as well as on earth. All the saints of God have their portion of bliss, not in a just equality. Moses and Elias were preferred to choicest angels, because they had authority of preaching in the Church; they first published the tidings of salvation, and are now eye-witnesses of the truth of what they preached. That doctrine which they taught brought them to glory. Two men attended Christ, and why? Because men are more concerned than angels in Christ's Incarnation and Mediatorship. Jesus Christ never took upon Himself the nature of angels. He was born for us—He lived for us, and died for us. Angels are not the spouse, but friends of the spouse—angels are but inmates of heaven in respect of us. Heaven is *prepared* for us—not for angels (Matt. xxv.). *Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels:* but not so heaven—

this is not prepared for angels, but for us. The joys of heaven are called *a sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, not with angels, *in the kingdom of heaven*. They are but servants and attendants upon our glorified nature. Moses and Elias appear at the Transfiguration in respect of Jesus Christ. The two grand pillars of the Church wait upon our Saviour. Moses and Elias were faithful servants, but Christ was the Lord of the house. Kings and prophets and the highest saints in heaven fall down before Him. As Joseph's brethren, all honor Him, all sheaves bow down to His sheaf; all the stars worship this Sun of Righteousness.

Moses and Elias gave evidence that Christ is the anointed Messias that was promised to the Church. He receives testimony and witness from Moses and the prophets. Thus Philip (John i. 45): "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth." St. Peter brings Moses to witness; for Moses said: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him you shall hear according to all things whatsoever He shall speak to you" (Acts iii. 22). "To Him all the prophets gave testimony" (Ibid. x. 43). And Christ accounts that Moses wrote of Him—"Search the Scriptures; . . . . they are they that gave testimony of me" (John v. 39). To prefigure Thee, says Moses, I instituted the Passover, and effusion of Blood; all my rites and ceremonies looked at Thee. To foretell Thee, says Elias, was my message and ministry. All the prophets from Samuel, and after, represented Him; all the patriarchs were types of Him, all join in Him, all like lines run to this centre.

Moses and Elias appear in behalf of *themselves*—

notwithstanding the admirable sanctity of these two men, they do honor to Christ, because they knew that He was the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and that no condition in life excludes His sovereignty. *All knees in heaven, and earth, and under the earth must bow* and prostrate to Him. They who went before and they who came after the Messias, all sing *Hosanna* to this *Son of David*. The Church of the Patriarchs acknowledged Him for their Head. All of them were *partakers of this common salvation. Christ Jesus, yesterday, to-day, the same forever.* It was a dangerous and blasphemous error of the *Manichees* and *Marcionites* to distinguish the God of the Old Testament from the God of the New. They counted the faithful of the Old Testament a carnal people, feeding only upon earthly promise; no, their estate was spiritual, and the promise heavenly, and they were partakers of one glorious Messias.

When Christ will come to judge the world, Moses and Elias shall assist His judgment. The Law and the Gospel shall give evidence against sinners: "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust" (John v. 45). Moses grew not weak or sickly, but continued in full vigor, till God buried him; so the Law hath an eternal obligation and force upon us and will accuse us, till Christ dischargeth it. "Whosoever have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (St. Paul, Rom. ii. 12).

The apostles erred concerning Christ's kingdom. They imagined it to be an earthly kingdom. Should He reign here what should become of Moses and Elias, and all saints who had departed from this world? Therefore the appearance of Christ to Moses, Elias, and the apostles, showed the nature of His kingdom — they

must sit down with Abraham in that kingdom. And when St. Peter made a noble confession of Christ's divinity, his dear Master confirms his faith by two glorious witnesses.

Moses was faithful in the house of God. See how he encountered Pharao. Elias was zealous for Christ's glory against Achab. Both zealous in God's glory, now they appear in rest and glory. These two appear also in behalf of the people, and their judgment of Christ. There were three opinions common among the Jews concerning Jesus Christ. *First*, a blasphemous opinion; *second*, a more moderate opinion, but yet unworthy of Him; *third*, a partial and superstitious opinion. All these are corrected by this apparition. They had a blasphemous opinion of Him; that He was an impostor, a transgressor of the Law, a blasphemer. This man blasphemeth (Matt. ix. 3). Moses and Elias condemn and remove this blasphemy. If He had been a blasphemer, Elias, who burnt in zeal for the glory of God, would he have adored Him? or had He been a transgressor of the Law, Moses would not have owned, much less honored Him. There were some who were more moderate. "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. xvi. 13–14). Some say "that Thou art John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets." That was the best they thought of Him; "a great prophet is risen up among us" (Luke vii. 16). The Jews held the opinion that none could exceed Moses. They would not allow Christ to be equal to Moses. "We are Moses' disciples—we know that God spoke to Moses; but as to this man, we know not from whence He is" (John ix. 28, 29). Moses, whom the Jews loved so much, gives

the precedence to Christ; he bows and prostrates to Him. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead, whom dost thou make thyself?" (John viii. 53). Whereas Abraham desired to see one day of Christ, so did Moses. "Many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see" (Luke x. 24), that is, Christ in the flesh.

These two men really appeared in majesty.

The apostles saw His glory and two men that stood with Him. This reality of appearance of Moses and Elias assures us of the immortality of the soul and the facility of the resurrection. The opinion of the Sadducees relative to the resurrection was wicked, because they taught that the souls are extinguished with the body. Moses, indeed, was dead and buried in the plain of Moab two thousand years. How easily can our Lord raise our bodies from the dead and place them in glory, seeing that by a single nod Elias comes from heaven and Moses from his grave. *Speak but the word, Lord, and Thy servant shall revive.*

They appeared in glory as noblemen appear in the greatest magnificence to attend the king. The glory of the saints is to attend Christ in glory. Take Moses and Elias apart from Christ and they become obscure, imperfect, fearful, terrible. Look at them standing with Christ, they appear comfortable and glorious, the shining stars of the King of glory. *Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* St. Paul calls them beggarly rudiments, void of Christ. Their conversation was upon a heavenly subject; it was most agreeable, which teaches us that there is no contradiction between the Old and New Testaments, but rather perfect harmony. Here

the Law and the prophets, like the two cherubs, are both compassionating and looking upon the Mercy-seat. This, our Saviour taught His disciples: "All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke xxiv. 4). There were certain heretics in the time of St. Augustine, who professed themselves enemies to the Law and the prophets. But, *non potes segregare Legem ab Evangelio, ut nec umbram à corpore.* "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a Prophet of thy brethren like unto me," saith Moses (Deut. xviii. 15). Like unto me, not contrary to me.

Moses and Elias had many heavenly intercourses with God on earth; to teach us that those who have communion with God here, shall be received with more free access with Christ in heaven. How can those who never raise their hearts in prayer or meditation look for access into heaven? It is remarkable, indeed, that Moses and Elias talked with Christ and not with the apostles. And why? There was no need of Moses and Elias speaking to the apostles on the mount, because these had already in their possession the books and writings which contained all that was necessary for man. It was enough for them to know that they themselves are now come "to the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament" (Heb. xii. 23, 24), that the apostles came to the society of the holy patriarchs and prophets, and of saints made perfect through Jesus Christ, because we are members of the same Church of which Christ is the Head.

The matter of conference was not concerning the kingdoms of this world, nor the rising and falling of monarchies, nor of the nine orders of angels, but rather

de morte Christi, of Christ's death. And why about the death of Christ? Because the grand, necessary fundamental work of Christ—namely, our redemption—should be accomplished by His death. "We hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel" (Luke xxiv. 21), but He is dead. Christ confers with Moses and Elias about His death to acquaint His apostles with the mystery, that it must be, as our salvation depended upon it. All the sacrifices were representations of His death; all the prophecies were predictions of it. Thus it was written: "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer" (Ibid. xxiv. 46). In this sense He was the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. "Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength? I, that speak justice, and am a defender to save" (Isaias lxiii. 1).

What honor like this to die for the Church, to be the sacrifice of the world, the ransom of mankind, the conqueror of hell and death. Peter solicits Christ not to die, Moses and Elias solicit Him to finish that glorious work upon which their salvation and the salvation of the world depended. And if the Son of God in His glory meditate upon His death, and Moses and Elias talk of His death, how should we season our thoughts concerning our final departure? Oh! Let death be our thoughts and frequent meditations.

SECTION IV.

THE CONFERENCE OF CHRIST'S DEATH VIEWED MORE PARTICULARLY.

Christ our Lord premeditates His death and Passion, knowing that through suffering and death He must enter into His glory (vide St. Luke xxiv. 26). In His humiliation He is refreshed with the expectation of glory. "Glorify Thou me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee" (John xvii. 5). When the Gentiles came to visit and to honor Jesus, He spoke of His Passion: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone" (John xii. 24). Abundance and worldly prosperity raise our thoughts too high, make us forgetful, nay, to abhor the mention of death. Greatness, like *Assuerus*, will have no mourning or sack-cloth (Esther iv. 2) to appear before him. "O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions" (Ecclesiasticus xli. 1). The thought of death should be like that *stimulus carnis*, that thorn in the flesh. Thus St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians: "Brethren, the time is short; it remaineth . . . . that they who rejoice, as if they rejoiced not, ... and they who use this world as if they used it not, for the figure of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31). Thus Abraham, admitted into conference with God, cries out: "I am dust and ashes" (Gen. xviii. 27); and Jacob, being in honor in Egypt, saith: "The days of my pilgrimage are . . . . few and evil" (Ibid. xlvii. 9). Thus Joseph of Arimathea made his grave in his garden. The thoughts of death are

well calculated to diminish all worldly pleasures—to lead us to repentance and reconciliation with God, and finally, when the dismal face of death approaches us, we dread not its horrors, but rather greet its coming thus: To others death seems the king of terrors, but to me it wears a milder aspect.

The nature of death is a departure. We are strangers and pilgrims upon earth; we have no abiding place. Our life is called the time of a soldier. Death is a departure, therefore no destruction. Thank God we are not of the faith of the Sadducees, who believed that death was no departure, but a destruction of the soul, an annihilation of the spirit. No, our souls die not, but depart only. Solomon calls death *a returning of the soul to God* (Ecclesiastes xii. 7). Immortality is a part of that image of God which remains indelible. St. Paul calls death a *dissolution* or separation, not a destruction and annihilation. The light of nature taught it to heathens, and the light of Scripture assures it to us. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19). The very philosophers discourse of the regions of souls, and world of spirits, and of places of abode, even after this life.

Is death a departure? *Migremus hinc* this must make that word sound in our ears. The saints profess they belong to another city. David calls the wicked the men of this world (Psal. xvii.). They settle here, make this their heaven. *The figure of this world passeth away* (St. Paul), *and the lust thereof* (St. John). *Sedemus hic juxta flumina Babylonis; omnia transcunt.* Look upon all things here as such that must be left. Then see thou finish all thy work. "Whatsoever thy hand is

able to do, do it earnestly; for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell (the grave), whither thou art hastening" (Ecclesiastes ix. 10). If we could stay as we please, and return again when we please, but *statutum est hominibus semel mori.* "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Hebrews ix. 27). If we were to return and die again we might recover our omissions, but we must accomplish all now, for if death once comes there is no return from the grave.

Is death a departure? Provide a place of refuge, for death is like a cruel landlord: turns us out of doors. What folly not to provide a place to receive us! This our Saviour commends in the parable of the Steward: "Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings" (Luke xvi. 9). This was our Saviour's comfort: "I leave the world, and I go to the Father" (John xvi. 28). This was the perplexity of men without Christ. The wisest of them knew not what became of their spirits. They that are Christ's are assured of a place after their departure. "We know if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven. For in this also we groan, desiring to be clothed upon with our habitation that is from heaven" (2 Cor. v. 1, 2).

The death of Christ was accomplished with His own free will, which gave merit to His sufferings. He was the Lord of His own life; no man takes it from me; I lay it down. And as in Christ, so in Christians, their sufferings and death must be voluntary. The death of the wicked is dreadful. It gnaws them; they are snatched to death. A Christian voluntarily accepts

death. When God calls him, he offers himself as Christ did. The death of Jesus Christ was a fulfilment of God's counsel and ordination. His death was appointed from eternity: "To do what Thy hand and Thy counsel decreed to be done" (Acts iv. 28). He is the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. Only Christ's actual suffering accomplished it, *else how should the Scripture be fulfilled?* Christ's life on earth was a life of suffering, a progress to death; so with us: we no sooner come into the world but we begin to go out; therefore, we die daily. Youth is the death of childhood; manhood the death of youth; age the death of manhood; then death closes all. Philosophers say: *motus* and *terminus* are but one thing really; so our passing and consummation of life is but one continued death.

All the circumstances of Christ's death—time, place, and manner of it—were prefigured and foretold by the prophets. The time of it was foretold and calculated by *Daniel;* the manner of it was prefigured and foretold by the prophets—the place, all the occasions, and instruments, and circumstances were designed. The Paschal Lamb not only was commanded to be slain, but on what day, in what place it was to be dressed, in what manner to be eaten. And as it was in Christ's death, so likewise in ours. Our time is set and fixed; the period of our life, the circumstance of place, all occurrents forelaid. Thus God appointed Moses and Aaron both time and place to die in. Thus St. Peter was forewarned by what manner of death *he must glorify God.* Our lives are in God's book; that time is fixed, as was the *Exodus* of the Israelites. Jerusalem was the place foretold and prefigured as the place of Christ's death.

This was prefigured in *Isaac's* offering on the Mount. There was no altar allowed, but this of Jerusalem; here the Passover was to be slain and eaten. Thus we read in Hebrews xiii. 11, 12: "The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the Holies by the High-Priest for sin, are burned without the camp; wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate."

The place morally prefigures the Church. Christ must die at Jerusalem; that is, His death is effectual for His Church and people. Out of the bounds of the Church there is no redemption or salvation. He who is out of this Ark perishes; he who eats the Passover out of this house is accursed; he who lives out of this Jerusalem is a heathen. They err who teach that in any religion there is possibility of salvation. No, *salvation is of the Jews*, said Christ; so now of the Christians—no sacrifice but in Jerusalem, no grace but in the Church. That is the place to which God hath respect: *There He hath commanded a blessing, and life forevermore.*

Come we now to the entertainment that the apostles gave to Christ's glorious Transfiguration: *They were heavy with sleep*—all fallen into a sleep. So in the Garden, when they should have assisted and refreshed Christ in His Passion, they were then fallen asleep again. It is true, commentators declare it was in the time of sleep. Peter and the rest were no church-sleepers, but being called to watch on Mount Thabor—Jesus praying all night—the weakness of nature prevailed upon them. This is the condition of the best saints; *corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam.* This is a life of necessities, *a necessitatibus meis erue me, Domine.* Some will say, it is human infirmity to sleep in church,

therefore we cannot help it; the fault is pardonable if rarely and seldom, and little done. Christ excused His apostles' sleeping: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak" (Matt. xxvi. 41). Sometimes we defraud ourselves of the necessary rest by late hours, and on Sunday make bold with the house of God to take our rest. "Have you not houses to eat and drink in?" says St. Paul. Sometimes ignorance and deadness of understanding is the cause of it. When man is unacquainted with the Word of God, naturally the soul sinks into heedlessness, and drowsiness of spirit. David had such delight in God's Word and calling upon Him, that he awakened at midnight. *Indecens Christiano, si radius solis inveniat dormientem* (St. Augustine). How much more unbecoming is it that the Sun of Justice should find us napping! *Awake, therefore, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God.*

The sleep of the apostles, as a carnal indisposition, represents our spiritual indisposition. We are utterly incapable, in our corrupt nature, of comprehending heavenly manifestations. Our understanding is most dull and unteachable in spiritual things. While in civil and common truths we are quick-witted and apprehensive, in the things of God the greatest manifestations do not affect us. "The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand; because it is spiritually examined" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Aristotle compares us to owls' eyes, that are quick-sighted in the dark, but blind in the sunshine. We must beg of God the light of grace, *lumen gratiæ*. God must open our understandings, or else we cannot discern spiritual things. We see this in the Pharisees, Nicodemus, the woman of

Samaria. Christ tells her of *living water*—for her life she cannot conceive any other than water of ordinary use. Such is our blindness, that by nature we are utterly incapable of spiritualities.

The apostles were struck with astonishment at the glorious vision of Christ. We read of the saints of old that a "deep sleep fell upon Abraham when God appeared to him, and a great and darksome horror seized upon him" (Gen. xv. 12), so (Ezechiel ii. 1) at the vision of God "he fell upon his face." So Daniel, when "he saw the vision, there remained no strength in him, and the appearance of his countenance was changed in him, and he fainted away, and retained no strength. And when he heard the voice of His words . . . . he lay, in a consternation, upon his face, and his face was close to the ground" (Daniel x. 8, 9). So John, seeing the glory of Christ, was struck with astonishment, "and when I had seen Him, I fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. i. 17).

The sun in its strength dazzles the eyes of man, much more must the glory of God. *The angels hide their faces.* If the saints are thus affrighted and confounded, what terror shall seize the wicked and damned reprobates at His great appearance! If this glorious Transfiguration were so dreadful to the apostles, how shall they approach near Him when He shall come against them in flames of fire? Oh! then shall they call to the mountains to hide them, and the hills to cover them. If glimpses of glory be dreadful, what will the ugly appearance of Hell and vengeance be? *Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?*

It is a good rule, *lex vigilantibus, et non dormientibus prodest.* "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the

dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee" (Ephes. v. 14). The sun may shine, but they that close their eyes cannot see it. When they were awake, they saw His glory. First they sleep, then they are awakened, then they behold Him. It figures out unto us the order of our enjoying the face of God. First, we must *all sleep the sleep of death.* Our mortality cannot admit of that vision—when we shall awake out of that sleep, we shall arise renewed, strengthened, and see His majesty. We see Him now with the eye of faith; the eye of faith must be closed by death; then, at our resurrection, we who sleep in the dust shall be raised, and stand before Him. "As for me, I will appear before Thy sight in justice; I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear" (Psal. xvi. 15).

They saw the two men that stood with Him, saw them, that is, knew them; but how could they know those whom they never saw? Some say they had seen their pictures—maybe from their conversation, or rather *ex lumine gloriæ*, and to foreshow us the happiness of heaven; then we shall know all the saints; as Samuel, by the light of prophecy, knew Saul, whom he had not seen before, so shall we converse with all the saints. Adam knew his wife as soon as she was brought to him.

SECTION V.

Moses and Elias, having done homage to Jesus as their God and Saviour, departed from Mount Thabor, and returned to those eternal habitations from whence they were called to attend our Saviour. And as they departed from Him, says the Evangelist (Luke ix. 33), Peter

saith to Jesus: "Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles—one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias, not knowing what he said."

The ministry of the law by Moses and the prophets was to continue till the establishment of the New Law (Hebrews viii. 10; x. 9). But when Christ appeared, and assumed the government of His Church, then He is the only Governor and Master. "The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the Son abideth forever" (John viii. 35). The law was dated and limited, but the Gospel is an everlasting Gospel (Rev. xiv. 6). Moses and Elias and the prophets gave light as a candle shining in a dark place (2 Peter i. 19), but Christ as the glorious sun. The sun alone is more cheering and refreshing than all the stars in the firmament, so is Christ than all the saints.

The other apostles were much affected, but Peter was most fervent, and breaks out into this passion; this act of St. Peter is one of the arguments of *precedency*; among many others that are counted up by Bellarmine to the number of twenty.

Bonum est nos hic esse. It is good for us to be here. The apostles were in an ecstatic joy. God makes Himself known to us; first, to strike us with fear, to bring us to comfort—first, astonishments, then consolations. Thus He dealt with the Blessed Virgin Mary: first, she was afraid; then she was raised to sing *her Magnificat;* so with Zachary; so with the shepherds. The devil, on the contrary, breeds false joys, but leaves true terrors in the soul. It is good to be here—it is good to be in company with the saints; depart from the company of wicked men, for ill company is a pat-

tern of hell, hasten from them; but the fellowship of the saints is a ravishing comfort, hasten to them. Hast thou the company of a saint? Prize it; but "depart from the tents of these wicked men" (Numbers xvi. 26). The joys of glory, and the presence of Christ, are ravishing and transporting. *Oh! taste, and see how good,* how sweet, *God is.*

Peter forgets all; he thinks not of kindred, nor of friends, nor of any worldly comfort. He is willing never to go down from this Mount; he bids adieu to father, friends, houses, etc.—he desires never to depart from this holy Mount of God. Peter heard Christ's Sermon on the Mount, yet said not then, *Bonum est hic esse.* Again, when He fed five thousand—in the great draught of fish—when the water was changed into wine—when the fish was taken with money in the mouth; in all these manifestations of Christ's miraculous power, we would have cried: *Bonum est nos hic esse.* But St. Peter was not affected with any of these, only at this Transfiguration, Master, saith he, *it is good for us to be here.* If a glimpse of glory be so delightful, what is the fulness of it? "O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!" (Psal. xxx. 20). If the glory of Christ's Humanity be so transporting, how much more the glory of His Deity?

Let us make three tabernacles—one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. Peter, though rash and unadvised and unreasonable, yet was excusable, and, in the meantime, commendable. It was *inconsulta et præmatura devotio* (St. Ambrose); unadvised and rash, but yet well-meant and devout. St. Peter puts not off Christ with empty observances. See David: *I will not*

serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing. Alas! we can be content to render Him some cheap observances, saying that is the best God and religion that costs us least. Oh! it is an argument of our base esteem of God, of religion, of our souls, of the kingdom of Heaven, when we murmur at any charge our religion requires of us. The Lord upbraids the Jews, thus: "Is it time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house lie desolate?" (Aggeus i. 4). The heathen scorned to hear of cheapness in the service of their gods.

Master, if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles. He submits to Christ's appointment. No service or worship is to be tendered to Christ but what He allows and gives warrant to. You shall not do whatsoever is good in your own eyes, but what Christ commands. In matters of religion, invention is superstition. St. Paul: *Tradidi quod, accepi; quod accepimus, non quod excogitavimus.* That God is to be worshipped nature tells us; but how, that is His choice and pleasure, and matter of revelation. Strange fire was abominable, so are invented religions. St. Peter cared not for his own comfort; the love of God had the first place. Love seeketh not her own, but the glory of Christ. When self-love sways us, then we are all for ourselves; take care for our own tabernacles; provide for our own. Whereas Tertullian observes: Not any that followed Christ ever questioned how they should live; none said: *non habeo, quo vivam; Pictas non respicit vitam, multo minus victum.*

What is that eternity of being which we look for in heaven? We cannot comprehend it. What are these heavenly speeches that souls and spirits use in glory? We cannot conceive them. What is that *impassibility*

and *agility* of our bodies in heaven? We cannot imagine it. What is that *beatific vision* and sight of the essence of God? We cannot attain to it.

If we cannot understand the life of grace, the union with Christ, the manner of regeneration, how can we understand Him, when He speaks heavenly? *Eye hath not seen,* and that sees far; *ear hath not heard,* and that receives much; nor *heart* hath ability to imagine or conceive those hidden things. We are no more able to conceive the life of glory than a child in the womb can conceive what is the condition of this present life. Nature assists us in the knowledge of this world; but the knowledge of God, of His angels and saints in glory, is a mystery locked up in that storehouse of eternity.

Peter knew not what he said, for his soul, and mind, and capacity, had been overwhelmed by the glory of Christ. "Thy knowledge is become wonderful to me; it is high, and I cannot reach it" (Psal. cxxxviii. 6). We must have *lumen gloriæ,* the light of glory, to enlarge, raise, and strengthen our understandings, to bear that weight of glory. The sun puts out a candle; so the light of glory will soon dampen our glimmering spark. This makes the very angels stand aloof and cover their faces. *He dwelleth in that light that cannot be approached unto.*

Peter erred in desiring to remain on the mount, as the vision was but a taste of glory, not a full repast of glory, intended only to strengthen their faith and quicken their hope. He was fully satisfied with the appearance of Christ's glorified Humanity. No doubt it was a source of great joy and blessing to see the *price* of our *redemption*—the body of the Saviour in glory. Nevertheless, no created glory can be the fountain and

fulness of glory to us. Not even the manhood of Christ, blessed by derivation and participation from a higher fountain, nor the society of saints in heaven, or the view of the Lamb of God, most ravishing; but it is the blessed Godhead, the face of God Himself, the adoring and enjoying a heavenly communion with the sacred Trinity that is our true, original happiness. "Show us the Father, and it is enough for us" (John xiv. 8). Our happiness is to behold the glory which Jesus Christ had not on Mount Thabor, but before the world was. Thabor is but a *viaticum*. Grace never leaves us till it brings us thither. As waters will ascend as high as from whence they rise; so grace that comes from heaven will ascend thither again. Jerusalem is from above; Thabor is but a colony that belongs to it.

Again, if Christ remain on Mount Thabor, what shall become of His death, passion, and redemption of mankind by His being crucified? No, the Saviour must descend from Mount Thabor and ascend Mount Calvary. "Thus it is written that Christ must suffer and so enter into His glory." How else should the Scripture be fulfilled, the Church redeemed, heaven purchased, the devil vanquished? Peter, the chief of the apostles, would never leave this place of glory; but Peter must go down and labor for heaven. Much labor must be undergone, and many services performed to attain heaven. We should imitate the spies that discovered *Canaan*, who came back and said: Come, let us fight for it, it is a good land. There is a *cup* to be tasted of, and *Baptism* to be baptized with first. Through many afflictions we must enter into heaven. We cannot go to heaven without the cross. We must be made conformable to our Head, who was consecrated by afflictions.

Crux, scala cæli ; the cross is the ladder by which we must ascend to heaven. *Moriendum*—we must pass through Golgotha to come up to this mount. The valley of death leads to this mountain ; that *strait* must be passed.

Three tabernacles : one is necessary and one only; all must be in Christ's tabernacle or utterly excluded. Elias must have a distinct tabernacle from Moses till Christ comes and pitches His tabernacle among men, then they must resign and give place to Him. *Unum ovile*—all must be under one Head ; all one Flock, and one Shepherd. Thus the Corinthians would build many tabernacles : One sets up a tabernacle for Cephas, another for Paul, another tabernacle for Apollo. Paul flings down these tabernacles, and sets up Christ's only. In the new *Jerusalem* there is no temple, *but the Lamb is the Temple* (Rev. xxi. 22). Moses and Elias are but servants of this tabernacle, of which Christ is Lord. There is no tabernacle in heaven, as Moses himself confesses : " Lord, Thou art my protector and my refuge " (Psal. xc. 2). Some worldly-minded men think these earthly comforts take place in heaven. *If there be a Resurrection, then there is marrying, and giving in marriage*, said the Sadducees. So the Jews thought, that if the Messias be, then there must be carnal victory, worldly pomp. So the Turks promise themselves sensual delights. *The kingdom of heaven is not meat, nor drink, nor any such comfort, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* We look for a *tabernacle*, and building made without hands.

Those eternal mansions, whose foundations are *eternity*, and whose walls are *salvation*, need not our poor cottages.

SECTION VI.

"And as He was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.'" —MATT. xvii. 5.

As King David, in placing his son Solomon upon his own throne, established his succession by his own approbation, so here God the Father puts the greatest glory and honor upon His Son in this magnificent and renowned testimony: *This is my beloved Son.* Three times this glorious voice came from heaven. First, when He was baptized by John the Baptist, "And behold a voice from heaven, saying: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matt. iii. 17). Second, in the course of His Mediatorship; and third, before His Passion. Then there came a voice from heaven saying: *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*

In the glorious testimony given to our Saviour, observe the preparation, *a bright cloud overshadowed them*, and the declaration, *This is my beloved Son.* A bright cloud overshadowed our Saviour and the apostles for divers reasons; first, to correct St. Peter, who proposed the erection of tabernacles, as if Christ in glory stood in need of dwellings built with the hands of men. *The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him* (2 Chron. ii. 6). Secondly, this cloud, by overshadowing the apostles, moderated the glory of Christ, lest they should be absorbed by the magnitude of its splendor; and finally, the glory of God's presence is usually represented by a cloud. Thus "He filled the Temple with a cloud." A cloud appeared upon Mount Sinai (Exodus xix.).

"The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the entry of the tabernacle" (Numbers xii. 5).

The Transfiguration and glory of Christ overcame St. Peter; he is not able to stand before the brightness of it; here God tempers Himself to their weakness. He spreads a pavilion and shade of clouds to shelter them from the surcharge of glory that was too great for them. As Moses put a veil on his face, that he might not amaze and terrify his people; as we cannot look upon the sun in its full brightness but under a cloud by refraction or reflection; so the majesty of Christ is insupportable till He veils Himself, and abates His glory, and condescends to our frail capacity. He dwells in a thick cloud; that is, His nature and substance are hidden and invisible. This is a glorious attribute of God. St. Paul calls Him "The invisible God" (Col. i. 15). "No man hath seen God at any time" (John i. 18). "He dwells in light inaccessible" (1 Tim. vi. 16). He is invisible to the eye of reason, the eye of the soul; no definition can express Him; no notion resemble Him; no understanding fathom Him. Reason has three ways of knowing Him, and they all fall short. First, by *way of causality;* yet that is insufficient, as His whole being or substance is not communicable to any of His creatures. Secondly, by *way of negatives:* removing all imperfections from Him; yet that shows what He is not, not what He is. Thirdly, by *way of eminence:* by ascribing all created excellencies, and reducing them to Him; yet these are but similitudes of Him, not really true of Him; these are finite, and we are not able to comprehend infinity.

God the Father never was visible by any apparition; God the Son was manifested in flesh; and God the

Holy Ghost appeared in the shape of a dove. Hence, the Fathers of the Church conclude that in the Old Testament, whenever it is said that God appeared to Adam, Abraham, Jacob, etc., still it was the Son who appeared; and those assumed bodies were *preludes* of the *Incarnation*. A cloud is obscure, but yet it is vanishing, it may be dispelled. The sun is able to clear the heavens of clouds; so that invisibility of God is but for this life: a time shall come when we shall have all veils removed, all obscurities lightened, all clouds dispelled. The Sun of Righteousness shining, shall scatter this mist; *Then we shall see Him as He is. In lumine tuo, videbimus lumen.*

It was *a bright cloud* which imparts the light and clearness of the Gospel. When the Law was given to Moses, a thick cloud surrounded him. On Mount Thabor there was a cloud, but bright. The Law, and the means of salvation in it, were dark and very reserved, in regard of the shining light the Gospel brings. Thus the Circumcision was a dark cloud, immediately signifying God's covenant with Abraham. Our Baptism is a cloud, a bodily material type, an outward element; but it is a clear cloud, representing distinctly the washing away the filth of the soul by the Blood of Jesus Christ. The Passover was a dark cloud representing the delivery of the Israelites out of Egypt; immediately, but darkly, it represented the Messias. The Lord's Supper is a cloud; a veil of bread and wine is over it, but yet it is a clear cloud, immediately showing Christ, and all His benefits. The light of the Law was like the light of a candle; ours as the day-star. The cloud of Sinai was not so much a cloud as a fearful disorder of storms and tempests, thunderings and lightnings,

which kindled coals of fire exceedingly terrible. The cloud on Mount Thabor was a bright cloud, the emblem of peace and serenity. Thus the Gospel is all peace and comfort. Mount Sinai denounced cursings; Christ on the Mount, begins with blessing (Matt. v.).

The solemn publication of this testimony: it is a voice out of the cloud: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." They saw His glory—now He recalls them to hear a voice; *as we have heard, so have we seen.* "What we have heard and seen and felt," says St. John.

The knowledge of Christ and the mysteries of His kingdom cannot be obtained here below by natural means, but must come by revelation from above, from the Father of lights. The sun cannot be seen but by its own light; nor can Jesus Christ be known but by His own revelation. See how the Divine Saviour catechises His apostles: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. xvi. 13). See how distracted they are in their opinions: "Some say, John the Baptist; some, Elias; some, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." *But whom do you say that I am?* Simon Peter answered, and said: *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,* and Jesus answering, said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon-Barjona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven." The knowledge of Jesus Christ, therefore, is an unsearchable mystery laid up in the bosom of eternity.

This voice from the cloud is a testimony of the highest and most sovereign authority. It comes "from the excellent glory" (2 Pet. i. 17). The testimonies of men may be questioned, but God's warrant from heaven is past exception. It is the confirmation of our faith

(Ibid. i. 16); we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known to you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. No, *this voice came from heaven to us.* It is also the conviction of the world's infidelity: *Had I not spoken to them, they had no sin, but now they have heard,* therefore their sin abides. Thus our Lord convinces the Pharisees: The baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men? Their conscience told them: *If we say, from heaven, why then did we not believe Him?* Take heed ye despise not Him that speaks from heaven. To despise the testimony of men, of prophets, of messengers, was punished. "He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in himself; he that believeth not the Son maketh Him a liar; because he believeth not in the testimony which God hath testified of His Son" (1 John v. 10).

Those who refuse to accept the testimony of the Son of God shall incur eternal damnation (Matt. xxi. 40). When our Saviour asked, "What will the Lord of the vineyard do to those husbandmen who reject His Son?" they all answered: "He will bring those evil men to an evil end" (Matt. xxi. 41). Their damnation is just, themselves being judges.

This is my beloved Son. To Adam, Christ was pointed out (semen muleris), the seed of the woman; then to Abraham (semen Abrahæ); then to David (semen Davidis); then filius (semen Virginis); all came nearer and nearer, but yet they never enjoyed a personal evidence and demonstration of the Messias. The Church before Christ was supported with promises; "He shall come; He shall be born in the fulness of time, but not yet," saith *Balaam.* The saints, before the advent of the Messias, were all in expectations; *They waited for this*

consolation; they received not the promises. The Father brings Him into the world; the Gospel presents Him to the eye of faith. They before us lived upon promises; we live upon performances; theirs was *gaudium quærentium*, ours *invenientium;* they were in a state of expectation, we in a state of fruition; they saluted the promises afar off, we possess and embrace them.

He is the Son of God: "Thou art my Son" (Psal. ii. 7). This is the foundation of the Church—that Christ is the Son of God; this the devils acknowledge: *Thou art the Son of God*, and that implies these truths: 1. The Son is of the same nature as the Father. The Creator and creature are not of the same nature; nor the workman and his work; but the Father and Son are of the same nature. Man begets man, not one of another kind; and God begets God. *Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten Thee.* 2. The Son is a distinct Person and substance from the Father; He is not a property or attribute in God, or a manifestation of Him, but a true, real Person, subsisting in Himself. 3. He is of equal dignity, of the same excellence; He counts it no robbery to be equal with God; He is high in the glory of the Father, placed *ad dexteram*, at His right hand. He is to be worshipped with equal honor as His Father. All knees must bow to Him, all tongues confess Him. *All must honor the Son, as they honor the Father.* He is of equal power and authority with His Father. *De Domino natus est Dominus, hæres omnium.* All power in heaven and earth belongs to Him; He is Heir of all.

It is an argument of God's great love to mankind that He gave us His Son. God tried Abraham's love by requiring the sacrifice of his son. That Christ is the Son of God is the excellency of His merit: that He could

vanquish Satan, abolish sin, purchase salvation, it was not because He was the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but the Son of God, and His acts are of infinite value, and Himself the origin of grace. God has freely adopted us, not that He wanted a Son, but that we wanted a Father. *He made us accepted in His well-beloved Son.*

There are three things that make a son beloved of his father, and all eminently in Christ. First, the son is the possession of his father; as Eve called Cain a possession. The father hath communicated himself to his child, and that makes him to love him. Much more doth God love His Son upon this ground; He is not *aliquid Patris,* but *totum, all.* Second, similitude is a cause of love; the Father imprints His likeness on His Son; in His own likeness He begat Him: so Christ is the lively image of His Father. 1. In His divinity He is the character of His Father's glory, a full representation of Him. *If you knew me, you would know the Father.* 2. In His humanity, all those created and infused graces that are in the Manhood of Christ, are prints of God's wisdom, holiness, mercy, etc., shining in Him. 3. In conformity to His will, Christ never displeased His Father (He lost His life rather than He would lose His obedience). His Father styles Him His beloved Son. "He is in the Father, and the Father in Him" (John xiv. 11). He is in the bosom of the Father, and He communicates His counsels to Him, and shows Him all things. He hath made Him heir of all things. Psal. ii. 8: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost part of the earth for thy possession." "I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a kingdom" (Luke xxii. 29).

Christ was most pleasing to God the Father. His infinite perfection is His Father's perfect image. In it there is all holiness, and purity, and goodness, exactly equal, yea, the same as the purity of God the Father Infinite goodness procures infinite love; but Christ's infinite excellency is infinitely delightful to His Father. Thus He rejoiced with Him and in Him from all eternity. This blessed communion between the Father and the Son took up that incomprehensible space of Eternity. It answers to that atheistical query, *What did God before He made the world?* He enjoyed His own glory and blessedness, and His soul delighted in this Son of His desires and love (Proverbs viii.).

In the creation God was pleased with all His works; He beheld them and they were all good. The Lord is rejoiced in His works (Psal. ciii.). But Christ Incarnate is the choice masterpiece of all the works of God. In Him He hath magnified all His glorious attributes; the greatest wisdom, the greatest evidence of power, the greatest communication of His goodness, all were discovered in this work.

In creation God communicated His goodness: 1. When He brings forth His creatures from the dark dungeon of nothing, and makes them subsist. 2. In communicating life, a ray of His life to creatures. 3. By imparting to man His own likeness. 4. By the production of grace in our souls, by which we are made partakers of the Divine nature. 5. The great and most glorious communication is that of Himself in the Incarnation. To make a creature to be God by personal union—this is the most incomparable work of God. This all the angels wondered at. If at the creation of Light, all the angels of God shouted for joy and admira-

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tion, as Job speaks, surely when all this work was achieved, then all creatures did wonder much more. And in this God was highly pleased. *He found folly in His angels.* In some of the best of them there was matter of displeasure. *But for this Son of God there was no guile found in His mouth.* "The prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything" (John xiv. 30).

God is well pleased with us in Christ, but displeased with us out of Christ.

Sin hath blasted the beauty of all God's workmanship. At our fall (Gen. iii.) the earth was cursed, and that curse none but Christ can take off. We have made Paradise a pest-house. The whole world groans, being made subject to corruption and vanity (Rom. viii.). As it was said of Jerusalem, *Why hath the Lord done thus to this city?* so of the whole world: Why is it devoted to destruction? Because of God's displeasure at sinners.

By what means has Jesus Christ gained us the love of His Father? By His *intercession*, by His *satisfaction*, and *merit*, and *union*. The prayer of our Saviour is of infinite power to prevail with God: "Father, I knew that Thou hearest me always" (John xi. 42). "Father, forgive them," reconcile us to God, recommend us to His mercy.

He is appointed by God the Father to be the Prophet and Teacher of His Church. "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a *Prophet* . . . . like unto me; Him thou shalt hear" (Deut. xviii. 15). He assumes this title to Himself, displaces all Rabbis; One is your Master, even Christ (Matt. xxiii.). "He is called the *Apostle* and *High-Priest* of our profession"

(Heb. iii. 1); and "the angel of the Testament (covenant)" (Malachi iii. 1). He discharged His duty with absolute fidelity without concealing any portion of God's truth. "The words which Thou gavest me I have given them; and they have received them, and have known in very deed that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me" (John xvii. 8). "None of those whom Thou gavest me is lost" (John xvii. 12). Hear ye Him. The Father sends us to His Son.

We have no voice from the Father but this bidding us to look for no voice but from Christ. Pharao sends all for corn to Joseph.

Moses and Elias were like ushers in the school. Christ is the grand Teacher. These stars must set now this Sun arises. We must devoutly hear the ministers of Jesus Christ. "He that receives you receives me." Thus the Galatians received St. Paul as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus (Gal. iv. 14).

The law was imperfect, insufficient, therefore it is abolished, but surely they will reverence my Son. His Gospel is the eternal Gospel. There is no need of curiosity after Christ nor examination after the Gospel. No man was ever so authorized, but his commission was limited. Christ has an universal charter. We must question nothing, nor doubt of any point of His doctrine, although beyond our reason in *mysteries*, although contrary to flesh *in officiis;* although beyond hope and possibility *in promissionibus. Hear Him;* adore Him not only as my Son; believe in Him not only as your Saviour, *in whom I am well pleased;* but hear Him as your Law-giver, and resolve to serve the Lord Jesus.

SECTION VII.

"When Peter, James, and John heard the voice, they were very much afraid."—MATT. xvii. 6.

God stirs up in them a great fear in order to force them to hear His Son. Those lessons that we learn with extraordinary fear make the deepest impressions on the memory. Those truths are dearest to us that cost us dearest. Fear, horror, and temptation are the most profitable schools to learn in; as a mother loves that child most, that she brought forth with the greatest pain and sorrow. While we are at ease no fears and terrors seize us.

Love is too weak an attraction to our servile nature; fear works more powerfully. We should remove sin from our heart and the fear of God will not terrify us. The least inward pain is more troublesome than any outward. A vapor in the earth makes an earthquake. Make Christ your sanctuary as children run to their father when anything affrights them. "I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me" (Psal. xxii. 4). Our fear should be a voluntary, religious fear of God, not a slavish fear—*Serve Him with reverence and fear*. An humble spirit that bows of itself shall never be broken. A reed that bends with the wind, stands, when an oak is rent up by the roots.

"Jesus came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and fear not" (verse 7). God was the Agent of it. It was He who produced this extraordinary fear, consequently He must remove it. This fear was brought about for a salutary purpose, namely: to remind us in our prosperity that we should call upon God

as well as in our afflictions. Sin is the cause of fear which God produced. "He woundeth and cureth, He striketh and His Hands shall heal" (Job v. 18). It is the part of God to inflict, to strike terror in the soul; no created power can strike terror in our conscience and convey comfort to it. This is the office of God alone. The outward man is liable to the wrath of man, but the conscience is God's peculiarly. Fear not them who can destroy the body, but Him who can strike terror into the conscience, who can affright the soul.

Outward applications cannot cure inward maladies—spiritual comforts are from God only. The guilt of certain sins which are unpunishable by civil authority, haunt our conscience; again, when no eye can see us or can accuse us of sins, yet the soul is troubled and perplexed. Cain had an easy escapement; there was none but his father upon earth; yet saith he, *Every one that findeth me shall kill me* (Gen. iv. 14). So David cried out, *Against Thee have I sinned* (Psal. l.).

There are three ways of curing our physical maladies: First, by allaying the pain; second, by stupefying the part affected; third, by removing the cause. So some outward worldly means may for a while allay and mitigate our spiritual anguishes; as pleasure: Saul gets the harp to chase away the evil spirit; or employment: Cain commences to build cities, to drive away his terrors; but this is no cure—others drown sorrow, yet this cures not. The cure cannot be effected but by removing the cause, which is the apprehension of God's power against us. We should avoid the causes and occasions of those physical fears, as there is no human power able to remove them; God alone is the true and only means.

Let us suppose that a disease were in itself deadly,

and but one medicine in the world to cure it, and that too in the hand and skill of one only physician; how careful would we be, not to endanger the running into that malady. These fears of conscience are like the king's-evil; none can cure it but the king.

It is said of leprosy that it was not to be cured by the art of the physician, but it was left to the Hand of God; so we may say of sin and the fears that arise in the soul because of it. God loves to see His people in a joyful, comfortable condition: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a moment of indignation have I hid my face a little while from thee, but with everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee, said the Lord thy Redeemer" (Isa. liv. 7, 8).

Christ came and touched them and said: *Arise, and fear not.* There was healing in His very touch, because the virtue that emanated from His divinity was a fountain of life. By His touch the daughter of Jairus was raised to life—two blind men were healed. If I but touch the hem of His garment I shall be healed; and she was according to her faith healed.

When our Blessed Redeemer embarked with His disciples, a storm arose in the Sea of Galilee. Whilst all went on well the apostles were unmindful of Providence, but after a little while, seeing the bursting seas foam over the deck, they hasten to the Saviour, saying, *Lord, save us, we perish,* and Jesus consoled their trembling hearts by calming the sea. The fear of God manifested in that storm made them stronger in faith—*Lord, save us, we perish.* God has promised to His saints that "they shall dwell securely without any terror" (Ezechiel xxxiv. 28). But to the wicked God hath said: "I will

laugh in your destruction, I will mock when that shall come to you which you feared" (Proverbs i. 26). "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. ii. 9). "Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon them" (Isa. xxiv. 17). But they that trust in the Lord shall not fear any evil tidings. "Behold, my servants shall rejoice, and you shall be confounded; behold, my servants shall praise for joyfulness of heart, and you shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for grief of spirit" (Isa. lxv. 14). We should say with David: *At what time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.*

Let us reflect and see the effect which the glorious Resurrection of Christ had upon the children of God and the children of the devil. At the angel's appearance the soldiers were afraid, and the holy women were afraid. But mark: the fear of the soldiers overwhelmed them, and the angels left them to shift as they could—there was not any word of comfort spoken to them. But the good women, though much perplexed, yet had a word of comfort: "Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus" (Matt. xxviii. 5). St. Paul was in distress, but not forsaken. When Daniel was struck with fear, then it was said unto him: "Fear not, O man of desires; peace be to thee; take courage and be strong" (Daniel x. 19). The voice of God affrights His apostles; the voice of Jesus refreshes them. He was sent to preach and bring comfort against our fears. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me; He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives" (Isa. lxi. 1). Moses preached terror,

Christ preached peace and comfort; He had a compassionate heart for the multitudes (Matt. xv. 32), and *for the two blind men* (Ibid. xx. 34); He was moved with compassion toward the poor leper, and cleansed him (Mark i. 41).

If we expect to receive any virtue from our Divine Saviour, we must be closely united to Him, because by His touch we are assisted. We must touch Him. Faith must draw us near to Him. "If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed" (Matt. ix. 21). Hence, saith Christ, "thy faith hath made thee whole." The Body of Christ, sanctified and quickened with the Deity, served as a powerful instrument to convey spiritual and supernatural power. "And lifting up their eyes they saw no one, but only Jesus" (Matt. xvii. 8). They saw Christ alone, Moses and Elias having vanished and withdrawn. The law and the prophets were to last for a time only, when Christ's office and glory and government began—Moses and Elias vanished; when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away; that which is imperfect must yield. Christ's presence and authority and government in His Church are lasting and perpetual. Moses and the prophets have served their time, have given place; but Christ remains forever. *Christ abideth forever* (John xii. 34). Hence the Gospel is called *evangelium æternum:* and the time of the Christian Church is called *the last time;* because there is to be no new instruction in religion, no new sacrifice, no change in priests or sacraments, no new form of government. The sun, arising, darkens all the stars; so all the former saints are obscured to the eye of the Church, and Jesus Christ alone must shine in His full glory; as when a king enters into any city all

authority is resigned up to him, so Moses and the prophets all yield up their place in the Church to Christ. He is the chief Doctor and Legislator. He teaches as one having authority; and it is in His power to propound what truths He will: He is the Lord of our faith, and may propound to our faith whatsoever He pleases. All other teachers are delegated, and must be regulated from this Grand Doctor. "The counsel of masters are given from one shepherd" (Ecclesiasticus xii. 11). Therefore, the apostles are messengers not going in their own names, or publishing what pleases them, but receiving tidings from Him who sent them. They are ambassadors—they must have instructions and limited commissions. Christ knows the capacity of His Church and children, and what they can bear. Thus, having given Solomon a large and capacious heart, He imparts to him all kinds of wisdom. To others He gave a full proportion for their judgments and understandings. Thus St. Paul, being guided by Christ's instructions, preached only easy truths to the Corinthians; gave them milk as unto babes—but to those who have exercised judgments, for them stronger truths. Thus, as the High-Priest was to divide the sacrifice: to God, His part; to the priests, their part; to the people, their part; so there are some truths which we must leave to God—some for ministers, and some for the people. That is the injunction.

Christ reserved some truths of His doctrine from publication till afterward. Having cured two blind men, He charged that none should know it (Matt. ix. 30). Having raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, He charged none should know it (Mark v. 43). Thus, in the Old Testament, the mystery of the

Trinity was reservedly revealed—the divinity of the Messias, that He was to be Man, was more evident; but it was almost a secret that He was God. The Scribes could not conceive how David's son should be David's Lord. The calling of the Gentiles was a secret hidden from generations. The Jews counted it blasphemy in Stephen when he said the ordinances of Moses should be changed. So now to us are hidden: 1, The conversion of the Jews; 2, The overthrow of Antichrist; 3, The second coming of Christ.

Christ was in a state of humiliation; so He will have His majesty and glory covered. He was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection from the dead (Rom. i. 4). It shows Christ's modesty, He is not ambitious to publish it. As St. Paul concealed his revelations for fourteen years; he glories in his infirmities and weaknesses; but, till he was constrained, he kept his rapture concealed. The apostles were *inepti*, weak and carnal, not sufficiently grounded in the doctrine of Christ's divinity; after His Resurrection they were endowed with strength from above, and then those mysteries that they could not bear, the *Comforter* revealed to them.

The infidelity of the world was not yet to be removed; it would not believe there had been such a vision. Pilate was troubled to hear it mentioned that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Christ concealed His Deity to give way to His Passion. "He charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (Matt. xvii. 9); but *He spoke plainly of His Passion* (Mark viii. 32).

HISTORICAL AND MYSTICAL CHARACTER

OF OUR

SAVIOUR'S PASSION AND DEATH.

THE Passion and Death of our Lord is the most remarkable and extraordinary event recorded in the history of the world. "He humbled Himself," says St. Paul, "becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). He who thus humbled Himself, being first made man, then dying, and that upon the shameful and agonizing cross, was the same who from eternity had been "in the form of God," and was "equal with God," as the apostle declares: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God." Thus speaks St. John, and he goes on to say, "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and at the close of his Gospel he gives an account of our Lord's death upon the cross.

The death of Christ was accomplished by His own free will, which gave merit to His sufferings.

Christ was the Lord of His own life: "No man takes it from me; I lay it down." His death was a fulfilment of God's counsel and ordination. His death was appointed from eternity (Acts iv. 28): "To do what Thy hand and Thy counsel decreed to be done." *He is the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world.*

Only Christ's actual suffering accomplished it, else how should the Scripture be fulfilled?

Let us try and fix our minds upon this great thought. Let us look upon Him who was lifted up that He might draw us to Him.

I will here call the attention of my readers to that dreadful yet most joyful event—the Passion and Death of our Lord. Jesus Christ and Him crucified was the great science which St. Paul desired to know. This is the knowledge which concerns us most of all. Devotion to the Passion is at once the surest sign of predestination, and the shortest road to heaven. To the young and old, to the rich and poor, for clergy and laity, the Passion is the grand object of devotion. It was the marked characteristic of primitive time. All that was beautiful in the middle ages shaped itself preeminently upon the Passion. The Church herself is perpetually honoring the Passion of her Spouse. There is nothing new to be said of it; but every man has his own way of saying old things, by which he reaches unexpected places in the hearts of men and kindles fresh varieties of love.

Let us study the science of Christ crucified with St. Mary Magdalen, whose memory perfumes the whole Church with the balm of the Blessed Passion. The science of Christ crucified gives us what in these days we want most of all—the old simplicity of faith. What is progress but an entanglement? What is the breadth of literature but a distraction from God? There is no grandeur in our work except through the old simplicity of faith.

The Last Supper or the agony in the Garden, the Burial of Jesus or His Resurrection—upon the whole, this is the

best way to consider the Passion, because it is the most necessary to the devotion of the faithful. Every mystery has its own lesson to teach, and contains its own treasures of prayer and meditation. We can never understand the Passion unless by repeated meditation we have mastered it in detail.

Let us make a simple picture of the Passion for ourselves. We stand upon Mount Calvary. There is a preternatural darkness all round us; Christ hanging on the cross, facing the west as if in prophecy of its grand Christian future. Standing beneath the cross, now covered with blood, is the broken-hearted mother of God, and now also mother of men. There also is the apostle John. There also is the glorious Magdalen, the brightest trophy of God's love. O, Magdalen! thou art there to tell how the hopes of all men may be so bold as to take refuge upon Calvary.

This is the Passion, the Passion consummated. This is the incredible revelation of the Divine perfections, which an angel's intelligence could never have imagined, and even now is unable to fathom. Incredible even when revealed, unless also a supernatural gift be given with the knowledge whereby we may be strengthened to believe it. That mystery on Mount Calvary is the fountain of all supernatural things. The blood shed on Calvary's cross has inundated all the children of forty centuries with innumerable graces, while it was still unshed itself. There has not been a grace in any human soul from Adam onward but it came from the foresight of that Calvary.

Even the inanimate creation had some sort of consciousness that Calvary was the centre of the world, even as old tradition held, that the waters of the Deluge

drifted thither the body of Adam and entombed it in the yielding soil.

Take the wings of your fancy and sweep over the broad regions of the earth, or send back your thoughts through the long series of ages past, and you will find the remarks always to hold good. It is that whatsoever you see anywhere of the beautiful, the great, or the lasting, it is always sure to be the fruit of a well-directed, persevering meditation on our Lord's Passion.

If the history of the world previous to the Passion is filled with presentiments of it, and is wholly unintelligible except by the light of it, much greater is the influence of the Passion upon the history which follows. It has implanted new ideas in men's minds; it has worn deep traces upon their language; it has vanquished the philosophy of the East, and given some sobriety to its wild and voluptuous dreams; it has enlarged the moral instincts of men; great social institutions shall be based upon it; governments shall acknowledge it as their authoritative guidance; it shall shape and fashion private life. From the day on which the mystery is accomplished, the world shall never get from under the influence of Calvary. Christ has been crucified; and every event in the world shall draw from this fact more or less of its significance; the world, as it gets further from Calvary, shall become more personal in its hostility to Christ.

From the great outward world, let us come to our secret selves. However remote our generation may be from the era of the mystery; whatever our lot may be among the diversities of human fortune; however far off from Judea our home may lie; our darkness and our light come from the top of Calvary. It is well or ill

with us, according as we are in harmony with the Passion which was accomplished there. All our miseries came there centuries ago, and were seen clearer than objects in the noonday by the inward eye of our dying Lord. They were weighed in detail—nothing escaped Him; His precious Blood was offered and accepted, and we became regenerated, sanctified, and redeemed. Thus the Passion rules the history of the world before the flood, of the world of the patriarchs, of the Israelites, of the heathen, before the coming of our Lord—and, in a stricter sense, is it almost itself the history of the world from the Crucifixion to the Doom. Thus is it also the secret of all biographies of individual souls: all their ruin comes from their disloyalty to the Passion; all their holiness in time, and their glory in eternity, are the consequences of their loyalty to the Passion.

And, O! what a marvellous spectacle was once exhibited on that memorable Mount Calvary! He "who clothes Himself with light, as with a garment; and walks upon the wings of the wind," of whom the sacred Scriptures say: *He walketh upon the waves of the sea:* to denote His uncontrollable power (Job. ix. 8); *He walketh about the poles of heaven:* to express the immensity of His presence (Ibid. xxii. 14); *He walketh upon the wings of the wind:* to signify the amazing swiftness of His operations (Psal. ciii. 3)—He was pleased to wear the habiliments of mortality, and dwelt among the *prostrate* dead. Who can repeat the wondrous truth too often? Who can dwell upon the transporting theme too long? He who sits enthroned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly hosts; He was once a pale and bloody corpse. O Death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! never

did thy gloomy realms contain such a prisoner before—prisoner, did I say? No; He was more than conqueror, He arose, far more mightily than *Samson*, from a transient slumber; broke down the gates and the strongholds of those dark dominions—and this, O mortals! this is the only *consolation* and *security:* Jesus has trod the dreadful path, and smoothed it for your passage; Jesus, sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the dismal mansion, and left an inviting odor in those beds of dust; the dying Jesus—(never let the comfortable truth depart from your minds)—the dying Jesus is your *protection*, your unquestionable *passport*, through the territories of the grave. Christ took flesh, and gave up the ghost, though He was the great *I Am;* the fountain of existence; who calls happiness and immortality all His own. He, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God; He, whose outgoings were from everlasting; even He, made in the likeness of man, and cut out of the land of the living—wonder, O heaven! be astonished, O earth! He died the death, of whom it is witnessed that He is the *true God and eternal life* (John v.). The divine Redeemer expired in tedious and protracted torments. His pangs were as lingering as they were exquisite. Even in the prelude to His last suffering, what a load of sorrows overwhelmed His sacred Humanity! till the intolerable pressure wrung blood, instead of sweat, from every pore; till the crimson blood bathed His body, stained all His raiment, and tinged the very stones. But when the last scene of the tragedy commenced, when the executioner's hammer had nailed Him to the cross; O! how many *dismal hours* did that illustrious sufferer hang, a spectacle of woe to God, to angels, and to men! His temples mangled with the

thorny crown! His hands and feet cleft with the rugged irons! His whole Body covered with wounds and bruises! and His soul, His very soul, pierced with pangs of unutterable distress!—so long He hung that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into sympathizing commotion. The *earth* could no longer sustain such barbarous indignities, without trembling; nor the *sun* behold them, without horror. Nay, so long did He hang in this extremity of torture, that the alarm reached even the remote regions of the *dead*. Never, O my soul, never forget the amazing truth! The Lamb of God was seized and bound; was slaughtered, with the utmost inhumanity; and endured death, in all its bitterness; for His murderers, studiously cruel, so guided the fatal cup that He tasted *every drop* of its gall before He drank it off to the *very dregs*.

The warrior dies like a hero, and falls gallantly in the field of battle—but Christ died not on the bed of honor, with scars of glory on His breast; but like some execrable miscreant, on a *gibbet;* with lashes of the vile scourge on His back. Yes, the blessed Jesus bowed His expiring head on the accursed tree; suspended between heaven and earth, as an outcast from both, and unworthy of either. What suitable returns of adorable and inflamed devotion can we make to the Holy One God; thus dying that we might live! dying in ignominy and anguish that we might live forever in the heights of joy, and sit forever on thrones of glory! Alas! it is not in us impotent, insensible mortals, to be duly thankful; He only who confers such inconceivably rich favors can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection.

Inscribe the memory of Thy matchless beneficence, not with ink and pen, but with that precious *blood*

which gushed from Thy wounded veins. Engrave it, not with the hammer and chisel, but with that sharpened spear which pierced Thy sacred side. Let it stand conspicuous and indelible, not on the frames of stone, but on the very inmost *tables* of our heart.

The only infallible way of immortalizing our characters, a way equally open to the meanest and most exalted fortune, is "to make our calling and election sure"; to gain some sweet evidence that our *names are written in heaven.* Then, however they may be disregarded or forgotten among men, they will not fail to be had in everlasting remembrance before the Lord. For hear what the oracle of heaven says: *Whosoever believeth in me shall never die* (John xi.). What sublime and emphatical language is this! Thus much, at least, it must import. The nature of that last change shall be surprisingly altered for the better. It shall no longer be inflicted as a punishment, but rather be vouchsafed as a blessing. To such persons it shall come attended with such a train of benefits as will render it a kind of happy impropriety to call it dying. Dying! no; it is then they *truly* begin *to live.* Their exit is the end of their frailty and their entrance upon perfection. Their last groan is the prelude to life and immortality.

I do not say we shall ever be able to solve the mystery of the Son of God dying on the cross for us, but we may understand in what the mystery consists; and that is what men are deficient in. Let it be understood, then, that the Almighty Son of God, who had been in the bosom of the Father from everlasting, became man, as truly as He was always God. He was of the same substance with God, and was God, because the Father was God. He was truly God, but He be-

came as truly man. "The Word was made flesh," but even this was not all. Not only was He "made man," but He "was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried."

Jesus Christ expiated our sins by His death on the cross. He is said to be the *price*, "λύτρον," of our redemption (Matt. xx. 28). "We were redeemed by His blood" (1 Peter i. 18). St. Paul says that men are "justified freely through the redemption of Christ," who is the expiatory victim through His blood "for the remission of former sins" (Rom. iii. 24). "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sins" (1 John i. 17), for which "He is the propitiation" (1 John ii. 2). In the Apocalypse we are said to be washed and redeemed by His blood: "Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Apoc. i. 5). "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood" (Apoc. v. 9). St. Paul even speaks of God "purchasing us with His own blood," and of the "Lord of glory" being "killed," expressions which, more than any other, show how absolutely and simply He had put on Him the nature of man. As the soul acts through the body as its instrument, in a more perfect way, but as intimately, did the Eternal Word of God act through the manhood which He had taken. When He spoke, it was literally God speaking; when He suffered, it was God suffering—not that the Divine nature itself could suffer any more than our soul can see or hear; but as the soul sees and hears through the organs of the body, so God the Son suffered *in* that human nature which He had taken to Himself and made His own. And in that nature He did truly suffer, as truly as He framed the worlds through His almighty power. So through

His human nature did He suffer; for when He came on earth His manhood became as truly and personally His as His almighty power had been from everlasting.

When we think of this we cannot read the last chapters of the four Gospels without fear and trembling.

For instance, when our blessed Lord, the eternal wisdom of God, was interrogated like a criminal and judged by His own creatures. Caiphas began by questioning Him about His disciples and His doctrine. Of His disciples He said nothing; and for His doctrine He referred him to those who had heard it in the synagogue and Temple, having always spoken openly to the world. "When He had thus spoken, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying: Answerest Thou the high-priest so?" (John xvii. 22). In weak men such an insult might have kindled an inextinguishable desire of revenge. But from Jesus, the sovereign disposer of life and death, it drew this meek reply: "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou me?" (John xviii. 23).

Then were His accusers called upon to prove all they could against Him. But so irreproachable in all things had been His conduct, and so pure in His doctrine that not the shadow even of anything wrong could be discovered either in one or in the other. Many allegations were indeed advanced, but on no other foundation than false report. The evidence, far from agreeing, even contradicted and defeated itself. Jesus remained silent before the wicked high-priest, who, finding it impossible to ground any reasonable charge against Him, took advantage of the candor and truthfulness of the Saviour's character to convict Him, if possible, out of His own

mouth. The high-priest then rising up, adjured Him by the living God to tell them if He were the Christ, the Son of God. Out of respect to the sacred name of God, Jesus replied: *I am; and you shall hereafter see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* Jesus hesitates not a moment to declare Himself such as He was; and the high-priest with all the rage of hypocritical zeal rent his garments, and exclaimed: "He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy from His own mouth. What is your opinion?" With one voice the whole council answered: "He is guilty of death" (Matt. xxvi. 66).

The night being far advanced, the high-priest went out of court, leaving Jesus unprotected and defenceless in the hands of an insolent rabble. There was scarce any kind of barbarous insult which they did not inflict on the innocent Jesus during the course of the night. The men that held Jesus mocked Him, and struck Him, and when they had blindfolded Him they smote Him on the face, and asked Him, saying: "Prophesy, who is it that struck Thee? and many other things blasphemously said they against Him" (Luke xxii. 63, 65).

And Herod with his army set Him at naught, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Pilate upon this called together the chief priests, the magistrates, and people; and began to plead before them in favor of the innocent Jesus. For he plainly saw that the Jewish envy was his only crime. "You have brought this man before me," said he; "you have charged Him with many crimes, but have proved no-

thing. I have examined, I have interrogated Him in your presence, and have not found Him guilty of one offence, nor has Herod. I will therefore release Him conformably to the custom which obliges me at this solemn festival to set some one prisoner free, as your choice shall determine. There is in custody a notorious robber called Barabbas, who in a seditious riot has committed murder. Which of the two is it your will I shall release?" "Not Him, not Him, but Barabbas," was the tumultuous cry. "What then shall I do with Jesus?" replied Pilate. "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" "What evil has He done? I find Him guiltless." "It matters not; crucify Him," they cried again, "and release Barabbas." They grew more loud and clamorous in their demand; Pilate weakly yielded, and the murderer was released.

Pilate, having gone thus far to satisfy the mob, though at the expense of justice and against his own conscience, proceeded to greater acts of cruelty and injustice. "Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him; and the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand" (Matt. xxvii.), "and they put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees, worshipped Him. Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe" (Mark xv.).

Lastly, "When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him" (Luke xxiii. 33) between two malefactors, and even there they did not cease insulting Him; but all of them, chief priests and people, stood beholding and bidding Him come down from the cross. How sharp, how deep did these

insults cut into His sacred heart—that heart most tender, the most benevolent, and the most kind that had been ever formed by the hand of Omnipotence!

Now let us consider that that face, so barbarously smitten, was the face of God Himself; the brows bloody with the thorns, the sacred body exposed to view and lacerated with the scourge, the hands nailed to the cross, and, afterward, the side pierced with the spear; it was the blood and the sacred flesh, and the hands, and the temples, and the side, and the feet of God Himself, which the frenzied multitude then gazed upon. This is so fearful a thought that, when the mind first masters it, surely it will be difficult to think of anything else; so that while we think of it we must pray God to temper it to us, and give us strength to think of it rightly, lest it be too much for us.

When we reflect, then, that Almighty God Himself, God the Son, was the sufferer, we shall understand better than we have hitherto the description given of Him by the Evangelists; we shall see the meaning of His silence, and the words He used when He spoke, and Pilate's awe at them. "And the high-priest arose, and said unto Him: Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? but Jesus held His peace" (Matt. xxvi. 62, 63).

When He was accused by the chief priests and ancients, He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him: "Dost Thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee? and He answered him not to any word, so that the governor wondered exceedingly" (Ibid. xxvii. 12–14). The Jews answered Him: "We have a law, and according to the law He ought to die, *because He made Himself the Son of God*" (John xix.

7–9). "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the judgment-hall and said to Jesus: Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer."

"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long time, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him in many words; but He answered him nothing" (Luke xxiii. 8, 9).

Lastly, His words to the women who followed Him: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and for your children; for behold the days shall come wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us" (Luke xxiii. 28–30).

Consider the words of the beloved disciple, in anticipation of His coming at the end of the world: "Behold He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him: and all the tribes of the earth shall bewail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Apoc. i. 7).

Yes, we shall all of us one day see that holy countenance which wicked men struck and dishonored; we shall see those beneficent hands that were submitted to the ponderous hammer and the piercing nail; that side which was pierced. We shall see all this, and it will be the sight of the God-man.

The great mystery of Christ's Cross and Passion; the sufferings and death of the Word Incarnate could not pass away like a dream; they could not be a mere mar-

tyrdom, or a mere display or figure of something else, they must have a virtue in them. But we are told that the fruits of Christ's death are also revealed; they are these: *The satisfaction of God's justice; our reconciliation to God; the expiation of our sins; our new creation in holiness; perfect redemption; a complete victory over Satan, the world, and sin, and the full possession of the kingdom of heaven.*

We had need of a reconciliation, for by nature we are outcasts. From the time of Adam's fall, all his children have been under a curse. "In Adam all die" (1 Cor. xv. 22). Nor should it be wondered at, seeing that Christ died on the cross, that we had deserved death joined with the malediction of God; but the punishment of the cross was a malediction, or at least He who was fastened to the cross was said to be cursed, and suspension was the sign of a resting malediction, according to that which is written: *Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno* (Deut. xxi. 22, 23).

It was necessary, therefore, that Jesus Christ should undergo this cursed death, that thus He might free us from the malediction. "Christ hath redeemed us," says the apostle, "from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written: *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*" (Gal. iii. 13). Again he says that Christ has "made peace by the blood of His cross. He has 'reconciled' us in the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy, and unspotted, and blameless before Him" (Col. i. 20–22). Or, as St. John says: "The saints have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 14). And no one speaks more definitely on this great mystery than the prophet Isaias, many hundred

years before it was accomplished. Read his fifty-third chapter.

We believe, then, that when Christ suffered on the cross, our nature suffered in Him; human nature, fallen and corrupt, was under the wrath of God, and it was impossible that it should be restored to His favor till it had expiated its sin by suffering. Why this was necessary, we know not; but we are told expressly that we are "all by nature children of wrath," that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified," and that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." The Son of God then took our nature on Him, that in Him it might do and suffer what in itself was impossible to it. What it could not effect of itself, it could effect in Him. He carried it about Him through a life of penance. He carried it forward to agony and death. In Him our sinful nature died and rose again. When it died in Him on the cross, that death was its new creation. In Him it satisfied its old and heavy debt; for the presence of His divinity gave it a transcendent merit. The sufferings of our sinful nature were very great and most grievous, nevertheless they were not eternal; the sinner deserved eternal punishment, but the infinite dignity of Christ's Person compensated the infinity of time. And thus, when our nature had been offered up upon the cross, and was made perfect by suffering, it became the first-fruits of a new man; it became a divine leaven of holiness for the new birth and spiritual life of as many as should receive it. And thus the apostle says: "If one died for all, then *all* were dead" (2 Cor. v. 14).

"Our old man is crucified *with Him*, that the *body* of sin may be destroyed" (Rom. vi. 6); and "when

we were dead in sins He quickened us together in Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly *places* through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 5, 6). Thus "we are members of His body from His flesh, and from His bones: for whosoever eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood hath eternal life"; for His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed; and "he that eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood abideth in Him and He in him" (John vi. 54–56).

These doctrines present to us a very different view of life from that which the world takes. Men whose hearts are set on schemes of this world, had they been alive when Jesus Christ came, would have disbelieved and derided the holy and mysterious doctrines which He brought. Alas! is there any doubt at all that they would have fulfilled St. John's words: "Darkness comprehended it not." There would have been no *sympathy* between them and the calm and heavenly mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. They would have said that His Gospel was strange, extravagant, incredible. What! (it would have been said), the Son of God taking human flesh? Impossible! The Son of God, separate from God, yet one with Him! "How can these things be?" God Himself suffering on the cross, the Almighty everlasting God in the form of a servant, with human flesh and blood, wounded, insulted, dying? and all this as an expiation of human sin? Why (they would ask) was an expiation necessary? Why could not the All-merciful Father pardon without one? Why is human sin to be accounted so great an evil? We see no necessity for so marvellous a remedy; we refuse to admit of a course of doctrine so utterly unlike anything which the

face of this world tells us. And as for Christ's miracles, if they had not seen them, they would not have believed the report; if they had, they would have been ready enough to refer them to juggling craft; if not, as the Jews did, to Beelzebub.

Such will the holy truths of the Gospel ever appear to those who live to this world, whether they love its pleasures, its comforts, its prizes, or its struggles; their eyes are waxen gross, they cannot see Christ spiritually. When they see Him, there is no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Thus they become unbelieving. In our Lord's words, "No servant can serve two masters"; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and mammon* (Luke xvi. 13, 15). When our Lord said this, the Pharisees *derided Him*, and He said unto them: "You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is high to men is an abomination before God." God grant that we may not be of those who "justify themselves before men," and "deride" those who preach the severe doctrine of the Cross! God grant that we may desire honestly to know God's will! God grant that we may not pervert and dilute His holy Word, put upon it the false interpretations of men, instead of thinking it what it *is*—a mysterious and supernatural subject, as distinct from anything that lies on the surface of this world as day is from night, and heaven from earth!

THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE MEASURE OF THE WORLD.

It is undoubtedly true that large classes of men live and die without reflecting at all upon the state of things in which they find themselves. They take things as they come, and follow their inclinations as far as they have the opportunity. They are guided by pleasure and pain, not by reason and principle; and they do not attempt to interpret this world, to determine what it means, or to reduce what they see and feel to system. But when persons, either from thoughtfulness of mind, or from intellectual activity, begin to contemplate the visible things into which they are born, then they find it a perplexity, a riddle which they cannot solve. Why it is, and what it is, and how it is, and how we are come to be introduced into the world, and what is our destiny, are all mysteries.

In this difficulty some have formed one philosophy of life; others, another. Men had thought they had found the key by means of which they might solve the mystery. Ten thousand things flash through our minds one after another in the course of life, and what are we to think of them? Are we to make light of life altogether, or treat the whole subject seriously? Are we to keep in mind what is past and gone, or are we to look on to the future, or are we to be absorbed in what is present? *How* are we to look at things? This is the question which all persons of observation ask them-

selves, and answer each in his own way. They wish to think by rule, by something within them which may harmonize and regulate what is without them. Now, let us ask, what *is* the real key? What is the Christian interpretation of this world? What is given us by revelation to estimate and measure this world by? The crucifixion of the Son of God.

The cross of Jesus Christ has put its due value upon everything which we see, upon all fortunes, all ranks, all dignities, all pleasures, upon the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It has set a price upon the excitements, the rivalries, the hopes, the fears, the desires, the efforts, the triumphs of mortal man. It has given a meaning to the various trials, the temptations, and sufferings of his earthly state. It has made consistent all that seemed discordant and aimless. It has taught us how to live, how to use this world, what to expect, what to desire, what to hope.

Look around and see what the world presents of high and low; consider the pomp, the state, and the vainglory. Do you wish to know the worth of it all? Look at the cross of Christ. Go to the political world; see nations jealous of nations. Survey the various ranks of the community, its parties and their contests. What is the end of this turmoil? The grave. What is the measure? The cross. Go, again, to the world of intellect and science: consider this age of wonders unparalleled; of incidents unprecedented in the history of the world. Discoveries the most astounding, enterprises the most brilliant elicit our attention and call forth our astonishment. Would you form a right judgment of all this? Look at the cross. Again: look at misery; look at poverty and destitution; look at op-

pression and captivity; consider pain and suffering, diseases long or violent; all that is frightful and revolting. Would you know how to rate all these? Gaze upon the cross.

Thus in the cross and Him who hung upon it, all things meet; all things subserve it; all things need it. It is their centre and their interpretation. For He was lifted up upon it that He might draw all men and all things unto Him.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, said our Lord to Nicodemus (John iii. 14, 15), *that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.* As then, the looking at the brazen serpent (which was a figure of the death of Christ) was the means of divine appointment to heal the Israelites, who were bitten by the fiery serpents sent amongst them for their sins, and to secure them from temporal death, so the contemplation of the Passion of Christ is the great means to heal Christian souls from the bites of the infernal serpent, and deliver them from everlasting death.

It will be said that the cross of Christ imparts to us a view of human life and of the world, which is not that we should take if left to ourselves; that if we look at things on their surface, they are far more bright and sunny than they appear when viewed in the light which the cross casts upon them. The world seems made for the enjoyment of just such a being as man, and man is put into it. He has the *capacity* of enjoyment, and the world supplies the *means*. How natural this is. What simple as well as pleasant philosophy, yet how different from that of the cross!

The world at first sight appears made for pleasure,

and the vision of Christ's cross is a solemn and sorrowful sight, interfering with this appearance. Be it so; but why may it not be our duty to abstain from enjoyment notwithstanding, if it was a duty, even in Eden?

But it is a superficial view of things to say that this life is made for pleasure and happiness. To those who look under the surface it tells a very different tale.

The doctrine of the cross does but teach, though infinitely more forcibly, still after all it does but teach the very same lesson which this world teaches to those who live long in it, who have much experience in it, who know it. The world is sweet to the lips, but bitter to the taste. It pleases at first, but not at last. It looks gay on the outside, but evil and misery lie concealed within. When a man has passed a certain number of years in it, he cries out with the Preacher: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Nay, if he has not religion for his guide, he will be forced to go further, and say, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit"; all is disappointment; all is sorrow; all is pain. The sore judgments of God upon sin are concealed within, and force a man to grieve whether he will or no. Therefore the doctrine of the cross of Christ does but anticipate for us our experience of the world.

The heart may be considered as the seat of life; it is the principle of motion, heat, and activity; from it the blood goes to and fro to the extreme parts of the body. It sustains the man in his powers and faculties; it enables the brain to think; and when it is touched man dies. And in like manner the sacred doctrine of Christ's atoning sacrifice is the vital principle on which the Christian lives, and without which Christianity is not. Without it no other doctrine is held profitably; to be-

lieve in Christ's Divinity or in His manhood, or in the Holy Trinity, or in a judgment to come, or in the resurrection of the dead, is an untrue belief, not Christian faith, unless we believe also the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice.

It must not be supposed because the doctrine of the cross makes us sad, that therefore the Gospel is a sad religion. The Psalmist says: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," and our Lord says, "They that mourn shall be comforted."

Let no one entertain the idea that the Gospel makes us take a gloomy view of the world and of life. It only forbids us to begin with enjoyment. It only says: If you begin with pleasure you will end with pain. It bids us begin with the cross of Christ, and in that cross we shall at first find sorrow; but in a while peace and comfort will rise out of that sorrow.

This is what our Saviour said to His disciples: "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." . . . "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." And St. Paul says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can they know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (John xvi. 22; xiv. 27; 1 Cor. ii. 9, 14). And thus the cross of Christ, as telling us of our redemption as well as of His sufferings, wounds us indeed, but so wounds as to heal also.

And thus, too, all that is bright and beautiful, even

on the surface of this world, though it has no substance, and may not suitably be enjoyed for its own sake, yet is a figure and promise of that true joy which issues out of the atonement. It is a promise beforehand of what is to be; it is a shadow, raising hope because the substance is to follow, but not to be rashly taken instead of the substance. And it is God's usual mode of dealing with us, in mercy to send the shadow before the substance, that we might take comfort in what is to be before it comes. Thus our Lord, before His Passion, rode into Jerusalem in triumph, with the multitudes crying Hosanna, and strewing His road with palm branches and their garments. This was but a vain and hollow pageant, nor did our Lord take pleasure in it. It was a shadow which stayed not, but flitted away. It could not be more than a shadow, for the Passion had not been undergone by which His true triumph was wrought out. He could not enter into His glory before He had first suffered.

And as regards this world, with all its enjoyments, yet disappointments: let us not trust it; let us not give our hearts to it; let us not begin with it. Let us begin with faith; let us begin with Christ; let us begin with His cross, and the humiliation to which it leads. Let us first be drawn to Him who is lifted up, that so He may, with Himself, freely give us all things. Let us "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and then all those things of this world "will be added to us." They alone are able truly to enjoy this world who have first abstained from it. They alone can truly feast who have first fasted. They alone are able to use the world who have learned not to abuse it. They alone inherit it who take it as a

shadow of the world to come, and who for that world to come relinquish it.

It is well the sacred oracles have given this doctrine the most explicit confirmation and evidence quite incontestable; otherwise, a favor so undeserved might stagger our belief. Could He who launches all these planetary globes through the illimitable void, and leads them on from age to age in their extensive career, could He resign His hands to be confined by the girding cord, and His back to be *ploughed* by the bloody scourge? Could He, who crowns all the stars with inextinguishable brightness, be Himself defiled with spitting, and disfigured with the thorny scar? It is the greatest of wonders, and yet the surest of truths.

Let the reader pause a while on this important subject. What are the schemes which engage the attention of eminent statesmen and mighty monarchs, compared with the grand interests of an immortal soul? The support of commerce, and the success of armies, though extremely weighty affairs, yet if laid in the balance against the salvation of a soul, are lighter than the downy feather poised against talents of gold. To save a navy from shipwreck, or a kingdom from slavery, are deliverances of the most momentous nature which the transactions of mortality can admit. But, oh! how they shrink into an inconsiderable trifle if they are in competition with the delivery of a single soul from the anguish and horrors of *distressed eternity*.

Is such the importance of the soul? What vigilance, then, can be *too much*, or rather, what holy solicitude can be *sufficient* for the overseers of the Saviour's flock, and the guardians of this great, this venerable, this invaluable charge? Since such is the importance of the

soul, wilt thou, O man, be watchful for the preservation of thy own? Shall every casual incident awaken thy concern? every transitory toy command thy regard? And shall the welfare of thy soul, a work of continual occurrence, a work of endless consequence, sue in vain for thy serious care? Thy soul, thy soul is thy all. If this be *secured*, thou art greatly rich and will be unspeakably happy. If this be *lost*, the whole world acquired will leave thee in poverty, and all its delights enjoyed will abandon thee to misery.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.

"And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three are one." —1 St. John v. 7, 8.

It is my design in this treatise to settle the faith and hope of Christian souls in the Lord Jesus; which is the true scope of the apostle in this part of his epistle. That this is the drift of the apostle's discourse, and ought to be the intention of mine, will be very apparent, if we go back so far as the *fourth* verse of this chapter, and from thence take our rise for that argument, which I purpose to pursue.

To know that we are born of God, and so shall be His heirs, is a thing above all others, with which we are most highly concerned. That we may have therefore a certain character of one divinely descended, St. John lays down this general mark of Him whereby He may be known, that, *whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.*

Now next to this there is nothing more necessary and desirable to be known, than how we may obtain this great and matchless victory over everything in the world that opposes our Christian resolution; and so undoubtedly approve ourselves *heroical persons*, as they were anciently called, that are born from above. And here also the apostle lends us his assistance; telling us in the

latter end of the *fourth* verse, that we must achieve this by faith. "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith." So powerful is a lively faith that he calls it by the name of *victory* itself. If we believe steadfastly, we shall tread the world under our feet, and easily despite all its temptations, as those valiant champions did, whose example St. Paul sets before us in the eleventh chapter to the *Hebrews;* a portion of Scripture which he that means to be a conqueror, should think he can never read too often.

But there is a further inquiry remaining which everybody will be apt to make, and that is, what this *Faith* may be which is so victorious and triumphant. And, therefore, the apostle takes care to satisfy us in this matter also, when he tells us (verse 5) it is nothing else but *to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

If this be not well proved by substantial arguments that Jesus Christ, who was born of the *Virgin Mary, is indeed the Son of God*, we can have no solid faith, and so no victory; and so no sonship, no hope in another world. The apostle therefore, that he may serve us in bringing some evident demonstration of this so important a truth, tells us in the next words (verse 6) that Jesus did not only say, He was God's Son, and confidently affirm Himself to be the divine Person so long looked for to come into the world; but that He came with very sufficient and irreproachable witnesses of it, viz., the *Water*, the *Blood*, and the *Spirit*, which made this truth good to all those who considered their testimony. If the first of these [*Water*] should not be thought great enough to merit belief; yet the second [*Blood*] joined with it adds great force to its persuasion. Or if both these seem too weak, yet this last, the *Spirit*, the

apostle doubts not is so strong to conquer men's minds, and make them believe in *Jesus,* that he says: *The Spirit is truth.* That is such an undoubted proof that Jesus was what He pretended to be, *the Son of God,* that no man can be deceived who relies upon it, and no man can refuse, if he give heed to it, to rely and depend upon such a witness. Now the whole country of Judea could witness it, that He came by (or rather with) *Water, Blood,* and the *Spirit.* And the apostle does not go about to make this good, that there were such *witnesses* (it being a matter confessed), but rather repeats it over again, as the strongest proof of His divine authority; adding, moreover, that there were three other witnesses, who by their concurring testimony would unanimously justify this truth. For, says he, in the words which I have chosen to explain: "There are three who give testimony (or witness) in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that give testimony on earth: The Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood, and these three are one." As if he had said: You cannot reasonably doubt of that which we preach concerning Jesus Christ, if you go but to those three witnesses to which I have sent you, the *Water,* the *Blood,* and the *Spirit;* for they all affirm with one mouth, that He was the *Son of God.* And as they testify this to you upon the earth, so there are three other witnesses also who declare it to you from heaven; to whom I first direct you, and then to those three that are here on earth, as I have told you, give their testimony to Him.

As the thing to be proved by these witnesses is the fact that Jesus Christ is the *Son of God,* it will be

necessary to search a little into the meaning of the phrase, before we examine their testimony about it. And it must be confessed, that though Jesus be the *Eternal Son* of the *Father, God of God, begotten of Him before all worlds;* yet this is not always meant when He is called *His Son*, which is a name not only expressing His nature, but often also His high authority and sovereign power, which He hath received as the Mediator between Him and us, from God the Father Almighty.

The apostle under the name *Jesus*, comprehends all that belongs to His Person, both His divine and human nature, and affirms that this Person has sovereign authority committed to Him by God, the Father of all, who hath given Him commission, and deputed Him in His stead to declare His mind, and acquaint us with His will. And having by Himself purged our sins, promoted Him to sit down at the right hand of the majesty on high as that great King and Lord of all, by whom we are to be governed now and to be judged at the last day.

In many places of the Holy Scripture, which say, *He is the Son of God*, the meaning is expounded in other places to be this: that *He is the Christ*, or the anointed of God. That is, Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the *Virgin Mary*, crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, rose again from the dead, and afterward appointed St. John and the rest of the apostles to preach those things to all nations which we read in the holy Gospel; was indeed sent of God (according to the ancient prophecies) with His own power and authority, and is now, by the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, to be our King and sovereign God, whom we are all to obey, and from whom alone we are to expect all our rewards.

I shall, in the first place, appeal to the testimony of the three heavenly witnesses, *The Father*, *the Word*, and *the Holy Ghost* for the confirmation of this truth, and for the supporting thereby of our Faith, that Jesus *is the Son of God.*

THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER.

If any man urge us to receive a thing which is new and strange, we desire him to show good evidence for what he says; and if he fail, or his proofs come not home to the purpose, he is so far from gaining any credit with those who examine them, that they prove a very considerable argument against him. Especially, when he pretends to come from God, and to bring us messages from heaven, we all expect clearer and more divine demonstrations before we resign our mind unto him. For if that which stands as a reason for all that a man says, be not itself grounded upon the clearest and most undeniable proofs, it turns against him and proves nothing but a confutation of all that which it was brought to assert.

Now Jesus pretended not only to this honor of *coming from God*, but also to a higher dignity of being *His Son;* (begotten of Him before all worlds,) and being invested with a power equal to that of the Almighty's. If He and His apostles should be defective in their proofs of so lofty and weighty a pretension, He would be rendered of all others the most contemptible, and they become men most ridiculous, for obtruding Him on the world. For the greater any assertion is which we propound to men's belief, the stronger arguments they justly expect to induce persuasion. The proofs,

therefore, should be proportionable to the weight of the thing, unto which we are to deliver up no less than our souls.

Let us see, therefore, what evidence this beloved disciple of Jesus produces and lays before us to make good this certain truth, which he preached; that He is no less than the *Son of God*. Let us hear what his witnesses say, for he calls them his proofs, to this great point; and consider whether we can reasonably refuse to believe it. The office of a witness is to give in all the evidence he can for the clearing of any matter in question; for this very end, that thereby the controversy may be decided upon his credit. When the apostle, therefore, calls for his witnesses, who are ready to justify this which he asserts, his meaning is, that it relies on such solid grounds, that no man shall be able to deny *Jesus*, the *only Son of the Father*, the *Christ of God;* unless he can disprove the authority of his witnesses, which he was sure would never be in any man's power to do, they were of such verity. If this be called in question, whether Jesus be the Son of God or no, St. John offers his witnesses, faithful and just, of unbounded truth and integrity, who shall make it good. So if you will hear them, and then give sentence according to their evidence, you must needs judge that He is what He said He was, the Son of God most high, and quit Him of all the calumnies and aspersions of the Jews, who said He was a deceiver of the people.

Now the witnesses that He brings, you see, dwell in two very distant places: *three* of them in *heaven*, and the other *three* on the *earth*. Let us first hear these supreme and heavenly witnesses, and take under examination what they declare concerning Him whom we

acknowledge for our Lord, and what authority He hath according to their testimony to exact all obedience of us, as He is the Son of God. And, first of all, let us begin with the testimony of the Father; for the truth is that He is the first who testified of Jesus, and by His voice from heaven, proclaimed Him to be His Son, before any of the rest spoke a word; so according to the number of these heavenly witnesses, He gave His testimony of Him *three* times: *The first* time was, when our Blessed Saviour began to appear publicly among the people; "coming from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John to be baptized by him" (Matt. iii. 13). He had no need of that Baptism, as John affirmed, and our Saviour did not deny; but having assumed human nature, He would omit nothing that belongs to the duty of a pious person, and, therefore, He would have the Baptist do to Him as he did to others, knowing that he exercised this ministry by the appointment of God. Now He had no sooner given this example of humble obedience, but as He came out of the water, God the Father of heaven declared Him, in express terms, to be what St. John here says He was, *His only Son;* which testimony is recorded by no less than *three* Evangelists, as you may find, if you read (Matt. iii. 17; Mark i. 11; Luke iii. 22). *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* So St. Matthew records the words of God the Father (from whom this voice came, it is plain, because He calls *Jesus His Son*), or as they may be rendered more emphatically, *this is that Son of mine, that beloved one* (whom the prophets promised particularly, Isaias xlii. 1). St. Mark says the voice was in these words: "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased," which plainly tells us that He spoke

to Jesus (and not merely of Him), and so St. Luke has recorded it more fully and expressly: "Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." As if He had said, Thou art the person to whom I have a favor above all others; I have anointed Thee above all others, none are so dear to me as Thou art, to whom I commit my authority, and invest with my power, and intrust with all my mind and will.

Now as we all mistrust private revelation, and think it not sufficient ground to believe one that says God spoke to him, unless he can bring some other very credible person besides himself to attest that he also heard it, or be able otherwise to demonstrate it, God was pleased, therefore, not only by other means to verify this, but so to direct St. Matthew's pen, that he has as good as told us that the voice which was directed to Jesus Himself, was uttered likewise in the audience of John the Baptist, a person famed for his sanctity, reverenced by all the nation of the Jews, and acknowledged to be a great prophet. "For the heavens were opened unto him" (Matt. iii. 16), and he saw the *Spirit of God descend upon Him.*

The Father Almighty, by this voice, awakened the attention of the Baptist, and bade him, as it were, mark it, that this Person to whom he now spoke, was the Messias, who now entered upon His office, being declared the Son of God, and should *increase* (John iii. 30), till He came to be declared by the Resurrection from the dead the *Son of God in power* (Rom. i. 4), that is, with all the power belonging to His office of Lord of all things, the great King of heaven and earth. God ordered the Baptist to make way for His Son, declaring that He should immediately appear, and be so much superior to

him (Matt. iii. 11) that he should not be worthy to be one of the Son's meanest servants. And thus he was told by Him that sent him to baptize (John i. 33): that on whom he should see that Spirit descend and remain, he should conclude that person was the Messias, from whom they might expect the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Satan himself, one would think, heard the voice, as he declared Jesus to be the Son of God (Matt. iv. 3): "The devil cried out with a loud voice, saying, I know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (Luke iv. 33, 34). "The devils came out of many, crying out and saying: *Thou art the Son of God*, ... for they knew that He was Christ" (verse 41).

If the Father's express testimony, then, be of any force, here you have it by an audible voice from heaven. And John the Baptist, whom the Jews—the enemies of our Saviour—reverence, bears record to him thereupon, that Jesus is the Son of God. Now, if any one should say that the certainty of this relies upon the testimony of one single person, and that it is possible he might have heard amiss; that this great truth might not depend upon the credit of the Baptist alone, though a man well acquainted with the manner of divine revelations, the Father was pleased a *second time*, and in the audience of more witnesses than one, to declare what He had said before, that He was His Son.

This was on the Holy Mount, as you may read in the following Evangelists (Matt. xvii. 5; Mark ix. 6; Luke ix. 35), where the Father of all was pleased to declare in the same terms as He had done at His Baptism, and with an audible voice, which astonished those that heard it (Matt. xvii. 6), that *He was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased*, to which declaration He adds this

command: *Hear Him.* Now, this voice was uttered in the hearing of no less than *three* persons, whom our Saviour had selected from the rest of His company, to attend Him on this mountain, where God appeared to bear witness to Him; of which three John was one, who therefore could with greater confidence urge here the testimony of the Father, which he himself heard. Then and there, on that Mount, Jesus received from the Father honor and glory, when there came forth from the mouth of God this voice, in all their hearing: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Thus I have briefly explained the *second* testimony, which God the Father gave Him in the audience of three of His disciples, who had a vision also at the same time, of the glory wherein He was to shine after His departure out of this world. To which testimony our Saviour would not have, as yet, those disciples add theirs; but keep this as a secret till He was *risen again from the dead* (Matt. xvii. 9). It was fit for the Father alone to speak now, from whom they were to learn what Jesus was; that, being fully satisfied, they might be the better able to speak of Him upon their own knowledge. And this voice St. Peter openly avers (2 Pet. i. 17, 18) he and others heard, when they were with Him on the Holy Mount. But, if any one should be so suspicious and distrustful as to think that the testimony of three is not sufficient, God the Father was pleased, a little before our Saviour's decease, which Moses and Elias spoke of, to give testimony of Him again, and to declare this more publicly which was shortly to be proclaimed in all the world.

For this *third* voice which the Father was pleased to send from heaven, was heard not by so few as two or

three, but by a great multitude of people, which makes our belief of this truth to rely still upon surer grounds. We read (in St. John xii.) that a great multitude of the Jews came to Bethany, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. Among the number who came to worship at the feast there were certain Gentiles, who were desirous to see Jesus whom the multitude thus magnified, and wished to have some proof given them that He was such a Person as fame reported Him.

Now, the first thing our Saviour answers to those who presented them to Him (which must be diligently noted), is that ere long *He should be glorified*. But first He must take up His cross in His way, and then the glory He should attain thereby would be exceedingly great; for His death would procure most precious fruit, and be the means of enlarging His kingdom, and bring in innumerable such Gentiles as these were unto God. And therefore He persuades His disciples (verses 25, 26) to adventure their lives, according to His example, for the good of mankind, which would redound also very much to their own honor; as they might see in *Moses* and *Elias* (who appeared, St. Chrysostom thinks, for this end, among others, to strengthen and encourage their Christian resolution in their sufferings.—Hom. 56 in Matt.). A difficult work indeed it was, at the thoughts of which He himself could not but be somewhat sad (verse 27), and wished, according to the inclinations of nature, there were some other way, if God pleased, to deliver mankind. But since He had sent Him into the world for this end—that He should lay down His life for our redemption—He resolves to submit to God, and desires only this one thing of Him: *Father, glorify Thy*

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name (verse 28); I am ready to part with my life, for I know Thou wilt be much more glorified by my Resurrection, and Ascension to heaven. There is no reasonable doubt to believe of the truth of this interpretation; for they glorify God most remarkably who die for the testimony of the truth (John xxi. 19).

Now to this humble request of Jesus, God the Father replies by a voice from heaven, saying: "I have both glorified it (my name) and I will glorify it again." Christ told His disciples the "Son of Man should shortly be glorified"; but first He must glorify God by His Passion, and then "God would glorify Him in Himself" (John xiii. 32).

Here God the Father speaks again in the hearing of John, in a way that was not vouchsafed to many other persons; and in such a manner (by a voice from heaven), as had not been in use for many ages; but yet was the most ancient way of communicating His mind to men, for thus God called to *Adam* in the *Garden*, and thus He spoke to *Abraham* and *Moses* and *Samuel;* and therefore He now speaks to Him who was the *Second Adam*, the true *seed* promised to Abraham, the prophet like to Moses, testifying both to Him and to others by His own voice from Heaven (which was the old way of revelation before all others, and a clearer way there cannot be) that He was His only begotten Son. And here, perhaps, it may not be amiss that this voice anciently was very low, whereas the voice to our Saviour was loud and strong, making a great noise in the ears of those that heard it.

I have heard the voice as it were of a gentle wind (Job iv. 16), and so Elias is said to hear a voice of silence (3 Kings xix. 12). On the contrary, you read in the last place expounded (John xii.) the voice which

spoke of our Saviour was so loud and audible that the people who were at some distance thought it had been a clap of thunder. It did not silently creep into their ears, but rent the clouds to make its way with great force into them. The voice which the disciples heard on the Holy Mount was so clear and piercing, that when they heard it they were astonished, and fell flat upon their faces (Matt. xvii. 6). The light wherein He appeared was not more visible than the voice which testified to Him was audible, and both were very amazing, which may very well denote the excellency of our Saviour's person, and efficacy of His doctrine above all that had been before Him. He declared God's mind more plainly and perspicuously.

And thus having made an inquiry into the testimony of the Father, we find it so full and clear on His behalf, that we must either disbelieve God, or else believe in *Jesus Christ*, and receive Him for the Son of God. For He received more than once *honor* and *glory* from God the Father, who was so highly glorified also by Him, that He hath now completely glorified Him in Himself, and therefore expects that His name should be perpetually glorified and praised by us.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE WORD.

We shall now proceed to the examination of the next witness, which is the Word, and to weigh the evidence which He gives concerning Jesus Christ; that is, concerning Him who was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary and called by that name, who said He was the *Son of God*.

We are told by the same apostle, in the first verse of his Gospel, that the Word is a divine being which had

subsistence in the beginning of all things. For He then was *with God*, the world was made by Him, and therefore He was God. Now, this Word, whom the ancients call the eternal *reason*, the *wisdom*, the *power* of God the Father, St. John tells (verse 14) was *made flesh*, and was born of the Blessed Virgin, and was the man Jesus. "A mystery," as Gregory Thaumaturgus excellently speaks, "which is to be adored, not scrupulously and nicely weighed; to be discoursed of in divine words" (Serm. 3, Annunc.).

The whole person God-Man is called the Word, as you read in the first epistle of St. John, where the Word is described to be such a person as may be *seen* and *felt* and *handled*, as well as *heard*. And He is very properly called by this name, because it is His office to declare the mind and will of God to men (as we by our speech declare ours one to another), which, otherwise, we could not know. For "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18). In these words we see why our Lord is called the Word of God. Not merely because He has revealed to us the counsel of God, for so did the ancient prophets and the holy apostles, but because He was the immediate interpreter of the divine mind and will, as the word which we speak is of ours. For He was in the bosom of the Father; that is, He knew His mind, not by the instructions of an angel, not by visions and dreams, nor only by the Holy Ghost, but by a more intimate discovery of God's counsels and purposes to Him as a person that was with Him. He had the nearest familiarity with God, and was privy to His secret counsels which He was able also to accomplish and to pass.

Jesus was represented in a vision to St. John as a "*King of* kings, and *Lord of* lords, clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, and His name is called the *Word of God*" (Apocalypse xix. 13–16). The article before His name, ὁ λόγος, the Word, denotes Him to be the person to whom this title so particularly and eminently belongs, that it can be given to none else. Because He had most perfectly declared God's mind and will to us, and revealed to us all His secrets in the fullest manner that can be.

We must not at present seek for any evidence which He produced while He was on the earth to justify His authority, which is comprehended under the *name of the Son of God;* but inquire after those only which He has given of it since He went to heaven, and from that throne of glory, this Word of God asserts this truth on three several occasions.

First of all, He showed Himself to His first martyr, St. Stephen, in a sensible majesty *standing at the right hand of God*, in splendor of the divine glory. By the power of the Holy Ghost the holy deacon confounded all those opposers of the Christian faith. He stopped their mouths by the wisdom and spirit wherewith he spoke, and they saw there was no other way to silence him but by taking away his life. His emboldened speech before the council cut them to the heart, and enraged them to the degree of fury that they looked upon him as if they would eat him up. But full of the Holy Ghost, and fearing nothing from an exasperated multitude, cast up his eyes above and fastened them steadfastly upon the heavens from whence comes our help; where he bade them all take notice (Acts vii. 54, 55, 56) that he saw the glory of God and Jesus shining at His right hand in

a far greater glory than they had seen in his face. But so visible was the royal majesty of our Saviour that he could not but proclaim it aloud, and speak, as St. Peter said, *the things which he had seen;* though he knew they would call it blasphemy, and punish him for it with present death. If any one should ask me how he could see the glory of God, and how he knew this to be Jesus who appeared at God's right hand, I answer that he saw God's glory in the same sense as others are said to have seen God. Thus Moses was afraid to look upon God (Exod. iii. 6), and the elders of Israel are said to see the God of Israel. St. Stephen beheld the Saviour of the world standing at the right hand of God. There never was an angel seen there; they only stand or minister before God or His throne. But to which of the angels did He say at any time, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool"? (Heb. i. 13). This is the prerogative of Christ alone, the great King, the Heir of all things, whose glory the Psalmist describes in Psal. cx. 1.

I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. That very person, he means, who used to call Himself the Son of Man, whom you crucified and dishonorably treated, I now see exalted that I had rather die as He died than not confess Him to be the Son of God, as He said He was when He died.

This was the first testimony which was given to this truth by the Word. St. Stephen resigns up his soul to Jesus almost in the same words that Jesus gave up His to God the Father. The last words of our Saviour were: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts

vii. 58). Now, lest any man justly call in question the truth of this apparition, our Saviour was pleased a second time to show Himself, and also speak very audibly unto another person of great integrity and authority, and that was St. Paul; whose testimony is more considerable, because he was a person of great note in the nation of the Jews, both for his descent and his education, and for his zeal in their religion. The name of Jesus was odious to him. He was transported with so bloody a rage against His disciples that his intention was to send as many of them as he could meet with all after St. Stephen, to whose death he had consented and kept the garments of them that killed him (Acts xxii. 20). And not content to make havoc of the poor church at Jerusalem, he enlarged his cruel projects and stretched his wrath as far as Damascus; thither he goes armed with authority from the senate (verse 5). In short, he breathed forth nothing but fire and sword against the worshippers of Jesus, being exceedingly mad against them, according to the account St. Luke gives of him (Acts viii. 3; ix. 1), and which he gives of himself (Ibid. xxii. 4; xxvi. 11).

Now who would expect that such a man as this should himself become a disciple of Jesus Christ, much less a preacher of His religion? A man noted for his violence, whose name was so terrible to Christian people that *Ananias* was afraid to go and deliver a message to him from our Lord, after he was told something of his conversion. Was there any hope that he should ever confess and publish the very same thing for which St. Stephen was stoned? And yet so powerful were the prayers of that holy martyr that our Lord answered them ere long by pardoning and converting this enraged zealot.

The first time and the most remarkable was, when our Lord met him upon the road to Damascus, not far from the city, and made him fall down and worship Him; whose name he so hated that he would have forced all Christians to blaspheme Him. (Read Acts ix. 3.) A glorious light from heaven surrounded him, and in that wonderful brightness there was a person appeared to him with such dazzling lustre that after he had beheld it he lost his sight, and could not see by reason of the brightness of that light (Acts xxii. 11), which was the cause that he asked with no small astonishment: "*Who art Thou, Lord?*" Our Lord, the Word of God, told him in plain terms, with an audible voice: *I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.* Saul began to yield himself presently to the heavenly King, saying: "What shall I do, Lord?" The Lord bade him go to Ananias, who restored his sight (ix. 17), after which He told him that he must now go and tell all men what he had seen, and what he had heard (Acts xxii. 15); that is, to declare to all the world that Jesus was the King of glory.

What could be more convincing than this? Especially when he felt himself filled with the Holy Ghost (ix. 17), merely by the laying on of the hands of one of Jesus' disciples. He saw that there was nothing truer than that Jesus was the *Son of God.* All his learning could not furnish him with an argument to confute or weaken this single proof which our Saviour gave him of His divinity. Upon this testimony from the Word of God Himself, without further demonstration, "he preached Jesus in the synagogue that He is the Son of God" (ix. 20). He even "confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, affirming that this is the Christ" (Ibid. ix.

22). So powerfully did he convince them that they had no answer wherewith to encounter his arguments, but only the sword; and therefore consulted to kill him; who, as long as he lived, they saw would be the greatest witness unto Jesus Christ. Read His epistles, particularly Philip iii. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 9, 10, etc.; 2 Cor. vi. 45, etc., xi. 23, and you will be satisfied that after he had become a preacher of the Gospel nothing but misery, trouble, infamy, and reproach attended him everywhere, and never left him till they had brought him to a shameful death. But this great man became so strong in the Lord Jesus, and in the power of His might, after He had from heaven appeared and spoken to him, that nothing could daunt him, so nothing could hinder the success of his labors. He became the most eminent servant of the Lord Jesus, and prevailed so mightily against all the opposition which the devil or men raised to frustrate his endeavors that he gives "thanks to God, who always caused him to triumph in Christ Jesus, and made manifest the odor of His knowledge by him in every place" (2 Cor. ii. 14). All his travels and long journeys proved in the issue as if they had been but the carrying of him about in a triumphant chariot to make him a glorious spectacle, where in spite of all that the most powerful cruelty and rage could do, he was still victorious, and brought divers souls into the fold of his Master, Jesus Christ.

The Word was pleased last of all, but more frequently than to any other, to show Himself after He went to heaven, to His beloved disciple, St. John; who had already borne testimony of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus, and of all the things he saw; had declared in his Gospel Jesus to be the Son of God.

There could not be a more fit person than he, who perhaps also was the only apostle remaining in the world, to hold communication with this Word of God, and receive new revelations from Jesus; he being at this time banished and confined to the "Island which is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. i. 9). In this lonesome place, separated from the rest of the earth, our Lord opened heaven to him, and showed him the glory which He had there. "He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard a great voice saying: What thou seest, write in a book, and send to the seven churches which are in Asia" (verse 11). Whereupon he turned about to see whence the voice came, and he beheld in the midst of the *seven golden candlesticks* one like to the Son of Man, appearing in the most royal majesty and power. He did not ask Him, as St. Paul, who He was; for he had been long acquainted heretofore with that countenance, and knew Him perfectly well to be our blessed Saviour. "He saw Him clothed with a garment down to the feet," .... as St. Irenæus truly expresses it: *Sacerdotem et gloriosum regni ejus adventum*, in His priestly and glorious kingdom. So glorious was the sight that St. John himself was not able to bear it, but, when he saw Him, fell at His feet as dead (verse 17), till the Word, on whose breast he had reposed, revived and comforted him, saying: "Fear not. I am the first and the last; and alive, and was dead; and behold, I am living forever and ever, and have the keys of death and of hell."

There is not one of his letters to those churches but begins with some description of our Saviour's sovereign majesty, and asserts His title to the name of the Son of God. St. John saw Him in a second vision (Apoc.

v. 6), in the midst of the throne of God, opening *the book sealed with seven seals*, which none could open or read, or so much as look into, save this Lamb of God who had been slain. The heavenly host made their acclamations to Him as worthy of the most supreme power and dignity. The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive "power, divinity, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and benediction" (Apoc. v. 12). "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally" (St. Paul, Coloss. ii. 9).

St. John saw our blessed Saviour in such a glorious majesty and mighty power, that the clouds were made His chariot, in which He sat as a Lord (read Apoc. xiv. 14). And there is another vision, which is all I need mention, where he saw Him again, coming out of heaven, with the royal ensigns of His victorious power over those who had opposed His authority (Ibid. xix. 11, 12).

The event has proved it was no delusion when he heard those great voices in heaven say: "The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall reign forever and ever," which was accomplished also with very great speed, as he saw represented by an "angel" which appeared, "flying in the midst of heaven, having the eternal Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" (Ibid. xi., xiv.).

If the question should be whether a person be alive; his own appearing in court would be the best testimony that could be given of it. If whether such a one be a king; his sitting upon his throne, with his crown on his head, in his royal palace, and his ministers round about him, would be the surest evidence that could be desired to put it out of doubt. In this case, therefore, the ques-

tion is whether Jesus Christ be the Son of God, or not; there cannot be expected a better resolution of it than His own witness to Himself, by appearing upon the throne of His glory. There several persons of unblemished credit beheld Him, and had the confidence to venture their lives upon the certain knowledge they had that they were not deceived. From thence He spoke to them, and directed them to speak and carry His messages to others, that they might believe in the name of the Son of God. And let it be remembered that we are now examining those witnesses which speak from heaven, and not those which speak on the earth; and then you will soon discern that these testimonies of the Word, though concerning Himself, ought to be received with great reverence, and to be judged very powerful to prove Jesus to be the Son of God. Especially since, besides His own word for it, we have also the word of the Father, who several times called Him His Son, and that before He took this honor to Himself.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Let us now hear the testimony of the Holy Ghost, who agrees perfectly in the same thing, and declares that *Jesus is the Son of God*. Witness that glorious appearance of the Divine Spirit upon Him when He was baptized; for here we may note *three* things as we did in the opening of the testimony of the other two witnesses. The first is when the Spirit of God descended upon Him, immediately after His baptism, and remained on Him (John i. 32, 33), then the Holy Ghost bore witness of Him that He was the Son of God.

That there was such a glorious majesty appeared and lighted on Him, ought not to seem incredible to any man that believes the Holy books of the Old Testament; as Origen shows (Lib. 1) against Celsus, who foolishly brings in a Jew speaking against this apparition. The testimony of Ezekiel, who says he saw the heavens were opened . . . . and Isaias writes that he saw the Lord, ... or John, who says the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and remaining upon Him. This is enough to stop the mouth of any Jew, especially since the power of Jesus Christ (as Origen proceeds) not only then when He was on earth far excelled theirs; but still remains now that He is in heaven, for the conversion of those who by Him believe in God.

"The Father loveth the Son, and He hath given all things into His hand" (John iii. 35). "It hath well pleased the Father, that in Him all fulness should dwell" (Coloss. i. 19).

What greater argument could there be, that He was the Son, than this that He had *all things* now put into His hands, to do what He pleased on earth; and received the Holy Ghost in such a visible majesty, as a pledge that He should shortly have all power in heaven too, at the right hand of God?

It is very remarkable that though there had been formerly an appearance of the divine presence, that is the glory of God, when the gifts of the Holy Ghost were imparted to some persons; yet, we never read that this divine presence came down upon any man, much less that it remained on him, but upon Jesus only. This demonstrated Him to be not merely a great prophet, but the Son of God. Never was there

such a crown prepared for any man's head but His. Never before did the hand of Heaven put such a diadem of glory upon any person as this which encircled our Saviour. This can be accounted nothing less than the testimony of the Holy Ghost to Him; that He was the *Holy One of God*, the anointed from above, the *King* of God's people, and *Heir of all things*.

Thus St. Peter expresses the honor now done Him, when he tells Cornelius and his company that God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with power (Acts x. 38). He was now invested with a royal power (for that's the meaning of His being anointed), and we ought to look upon this as a solemn inauguration of Him in His Kingdom. When our Lord was examined by Pilate upon this very point, He Himself affirms in express words, that He had a kingdom, though not of this world, but heavenly (John xviii. 36). The governor asked Him again, "*Art Thou a King then?*" (verse 37); *i. e.*, Yes, I am; it is as thou sayest,—so the rest of the Evangelists report His answer. "*Thou sayest it*" (Matt. xxvii. 11; Mark xv. 2; Luke xxiii. 3); which is as much in their language, as to say *it is so;* thou hast said right *I am a King*.

This testimony which the Holy Ghost gave to Jesus Christ when He anointed Him at His baptism, was so remarkable that Mahomet has not forgotten to leave a remembrance of it in his *Alcoran*. The angel Gabriel brought the news to our Saviour's Mother, but he did not pretend that she should conceive by his power; no he says expressly, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (Luke i. 35).

The Tabernacle, the place where the divine glory

made its residence, was called the Most Holy, and was built by particular directions which God Himself gave, and by a divine art wherewith the workmen were inspired, and no other. Thus was the Temple of our Saviour's Body, likewise, set apart and separated from all common flesh to be the dwelling-place of God. Man had no hand in the making of it; but it was formed in the womb of a pure Virgin by the power of the Holy Ghost. Upon which reason the angel calls Him before He was conceived τὸ Ἅγιον (Luke i. 35), the Holy One. Nor did the good angels only acknowledge this, but the evil also call Him *the Holy One of God* (Mark i. 24). What should we do then but after such evident proofs that God is in Him, fall down, and with the most humble and joyful reverence worship Him, who is the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth (John i. 14)?

The second testimony of the Holy Ghost was upon the day of Pentecost, when He gave a more public testimony to Him, than at His baptism, that He was the Son of God. For His apostles being then assembled together in one place, on a sudden there came such a mighty inspiration from Him, who a little before had breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; that the sound of it was like that of a violent blast of wind, which was anciently a token of a divine presence approaching (Gen. iii. 8), and now was a sign that they should carry all before them. It was the Spirit of God that came down upon our Saviour at His baptism, and ever after dwelt in Him; who now sent the apostles just as the Father had sent Him. For a bright flame was seen upon their heads, and they were baptized with the Holy

Ghost and with fire. So St. Luke reports that "there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (Acts ii. 3, 4). All Jerusalem, Parthians and Medes, inhabitants of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, Jews from Egypt and Rome, from Libya, Crete, and Arabia, were witnesses and were amazed to hear the apostles speak in their own tongues, *the wonderful works of God* (verse 11).

The Holy Ghost was the fulfilment of what Christ had predicted and promised a little before His going away from them. At the very mention of that word, they were very disconsolate, and *sorrow filled their hearts*, whereupon He cheers them up with this assurance, that He would not leave them like so many fatherless children, but would ask the Father and He would give them another Paraclete, who would abide with them forever (John xiv. 16). This, He tells them, was the Spirit of Truth (verse 17) whom the Father would send in His name (verse 26). Nothing was more evident to them than this great truth; whatsoever distrust they might have before, with this mighty inspiration all their doubts were blown away, like the dust before the wind.

This fire which appeared on their heads purged their souls from all the relics of infidelity, if there were any remaining. They could do nothing now but speak the praises of the Saviour and proclaim Him with these tongues to all the world to be the Lord.

The Holy Ghost vindicated His rights, which the Jews would have taken from Him; and that not *He*

but *they* were the guilty persons who had condemned Him for saying He was the Son of God. This was the very end of the coming of the Divine Spirit, and our Saviour also told His apostles a little before His death (John xiv. 7, 8, 9), where He says that if He went away He would send the Paraclete—that is, His Advocate—unto them, whose office should be, *to convince the world of sin, of justice, and of judgment.*

The Paraclete came to plead the cause of our Saviour; to maintain His innocence; and to prove against all accusers, that though He was condemned by men, yet He was acquitted by God and had said nothing but the truth. The great thing they laid to His charge, as you read in Matt. xxvi. 63, 64, was that He affirmed, when they adjured Him by the living God, He was *the Christ, the Son of God.* This was the blasphemy which they pretended wounded their hearts with grief when they heard it, and for which they adjudged Him worthy of death. Now what could demonstrate the vileness of this calumny, and prove Him not guilty more than such a power possessing His followers even after He was dead, as they saw in Himself when He was alive? Nay, a far greater which declared, as they truly said, that "He was Lord of all" (Acts x. 36). He could not have done such things as they beheld were wrought at the invoking of His Name if He were not truly the Son of God.

This heavenly witness never failed to appear, when there was need of Him to justify our Saviour and rectify the opinion of the world, by reversing the false judgment of the Jews. The tables were turned by the appearance of this Paraclete, who pleaded so strongly and convincingly, that many who had before accounted Him

an evil-doer now confessed Him to be a just person. They who had reviled, now gave Him worship and honor. They that crucified Him, said as the Centurion, when they heard the Holy Ghost speak on His behalf: "Indeed this was the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 54).

The Sanhedrim (the supreme court of judicature among the Jews) knew not what to say to the apostles, they only clapped them in prison for preaching Jesus (Acts iv. 3); they dare not pass the sentence of death upon them, according as the law directed; the people glorifying God for what they saw them do by the power of the Holy Ghost. Nay, so much were some of this great council staggered that according to the persuasion of Gamaliel, a great master among them, they let the apostles go free after a second imprisonment, lest "perhaps they should be found fighters against God" (Acts v. 39). If this be a human project, says that wise man, do not trouble yourselves about it; for it will come to naught, as the vain attempts of others have done who at first drew people after them. But if these men prove to be authorized by God and He will have it so, who can overthrow it? We had best take heed how we proceed in a business wherein we may chance to have God against us. It is better, in my judgment, to be quiet, and see what the issue will be, lest instead of contending with men, we be found to oppose God Almighty Himself.

And the issue was this, that by the power of the Holy Ghost our Lord Jesus obtained a kingdom, and men were persuaded to submit unto Him, though He was invisible, and not likely to reward their services in this world at all, but only in another. The same power proclaimed Him throughout the world to be the Lord of life and glory—and by the mere preaching of the

Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, as St. Peter speaks (1 Pet. i. 12), the nations were subdued to Him and acknowledged Him for their sovereign.

The Jewish rulers said, "Speak not at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts iv. 18). But Jesus their Master had said: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15); or as it is in Matt. xxviii. 19: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." But suppose the disciples should have said: though we are to do anything for Thy sake, yet how shall we accomplish this? How, for example, shall we speak to the Romans, of whose language we are ignorant? Or, how shall we teach the Egyptians, and the Indians, and the Scythians, who have but one tongue which we learnt of our mothers, and that but a rude one? We shall stand dumb before them and say nothing. They will take us for a company of fools. Or even if we could speak their tongues, what hope have we to prevail with them? Who will be persuaded by such men as we, to forsake the religion of their country and to embrace Thine, who art a stranger to them? Truly, that had been but a rational question, if our Saviour had not taken care to prevent it, by adding those to His mandate: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation." He had said a little before: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth (verse 18), go therefore teach all nations; advance my authority, and spread my kingdom, and do not doubt but you shall effect the business; for I who have all power will be with you. And so He was, by the power of the

Holy Ghost who was His Advocate, for He gave them the gifts of tongues. He accompanied them everywhere, if they did not but mention His Name with signs and miracles; yea, the very shadow of some of them did more than all the power of medicines. This was a very great demonstration of His supreme dominion over all creatures. "And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with confidence" (Acts iv. 31).

And this leads to the last testimony which the Holy Ghost gave by descending upon other persons as well as upon the apostles; though not in such a visible form as He did on the day of *Pentecost*. But whenever they laid their hands upon any person who believed in Jesus and was baptized, presently the Holy Ghost fell down upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts vii. 15–17; Ibid. xix. 6). This laying on of their hands was ever after the only external sign of divine power (for that is the meaning of *stretching out the hand*) wherewith they should be endowed at the request of the apostles (Acts iv. 30).

When the apostles received the Holy Ghost they were made the principal officers of Christ's kingdom, and endowed with such a power to remit sins, and unloose men from the punishment of them as He had (John xx. 22, 23). All others to whom He imparted this gift were openly declared "the sons of God, and if sons, heirs also; heirs, indeed, of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 16, 17). They were not of small number who were partakers of the Holy Ghost. For St. Peter promises Him to all that would repent and be baptized, at which word *three thousand souls were added to them* (Acts ii. 38–41).

As St. Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his friends, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word*, to the great astonishment of the Jewish Christians, who wondered to hear them speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts x. 44, 45). Our Lord did not cease to pour out more and more of His Spirit on *all flesh* even after the apostles were dead. But as St. Justin tells us, the Jews (in his time) "One might have seen among Christians, both women and men, who had gifts from the Spirit of God." And so in the days of Origen, who to convince Celsus that it was no fable which was reported of the descent of the Holy Ghost on our Saviour, affirms that "there were still remaining among them some footsteps of that Holy Spirit which was seen in the form of a dove. For they dispossessed devils, performed many cures, foresaw some things according to the will and pleasure of the *Word* concerning what was to come" (Lib. Contr. Celsum.) And the same Justin says in his first apology that there were many healed by the name of Jesus Christ in the city of Rome, whom no other person could heal. I shall say no more concerning these witnesses from heaven; they *are one*, you see, in their testimony as well as in their nature; they all agree in this, that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*. If Jesus Christ be not the Son of God, if He do not prove it by undeniable arguments, then do as you wish; but if He be, then you are bound to yield Him the humble subjection, and it will be a strange stupidity to dispute the matter with Him. There can be no color for your refusal, should you deny to be governed by Him who comes with such authority, that the *fulness of the Godhead*, as you have heard, *dwells in Him bodily*. Now that God has sent salvation to us by One that is

mighty to save, He has revealed Himself so graciously, and made such discoveries of His love and power and glory to all mankind that they may confidently hope to be restored to the image and likeness of God again.

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE WATER.

Having briefly examined the testimony of the *first three witnesses*, we shall now go to the *other three* who are nearer to us than the former, and take their evidence for our further confirmation in this belief that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

After the apostle had said that the only conqueror is he who believes Jesus to be the Son of God, he adds: This is He that came by Water and Blood, Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by blood also; and it is the Spirit which testifieth, etc. Christ our Lord proved by these three witnesses that He Himself was the person whom God promised should come to redeem the world. Let us, therefore, examine diligently their testimony that the faith of Jesus Christ may still be rooted deeper in our hearts. And let us hear them in that order in which they stand in the sixth verse, receiving first the testimony of the *water*, then of the *blood*, and then of the *Spirit.*

The testimony of water can mean nothing else but either purity and innocence, or else baptism. Nor do we vary from the scope of the apostle when we say that the testimony of water signifies the purity and innocence of Christ's doctrine and life.

We use water to purify bodily defilements; and therefore when the prophet would express the inten-

tion of God to purify His people from moral filthiness He says, "He will pour clean water upon them" (Ezech. xxxvi. 25), and in other places He calls upon them to wash themselves, when He would have them amend their ways and lead new and holy lives. And when we speak of the purity of Jesus, wherewith He came, we must consider that there is a double sanctity or holiness for which He was eminent above all other persons. The one is of His doctrine wherewith Christ is said to cleanse His Church for which He died (Ephes. v. 26): "He delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life." The word (the preaching of the Gospel) is either the explanation of the *washing with water*, or else denotes that Christian instruction which accompanies baptism, to which, by our being washed with water in the name of Christ, we are bound to attend as the great instrument of our purification. The other is the holiness of life and conversation, which the same word, water, is used to express in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 22) where the apostle exhorts all those who believed there was such a royal High-Priest as Jesus set over the family of God, to worship Him with integrity of heart, doubting nothing of the truth of His promises, "having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with clean water."

Now, by a short view of the perfect spotlessness of Jesus in regard of His doctrine and of His life, we shall be able from thence strongly to draw this conclusion, that He must needs be the *Son of God.*

The purity of His doctrine is such that it not only teaches no evil at all, but teaches all manner of goodness, and severely punishes every vice. Jesus declared

the wrath of God from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

He has first of all so clearly revealed to us the one God, Creator of heaven and earth, that none could do it more expressly, or with greater reverence to His majesty: "This is eternal life, to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He had sent." The Jews might have seen that His design was far more noble and more glorious than that of Moses, who contented himself to preserve that one nation from the infection of idolatry, whereas our Lord plainly declared His intention was, by His apostles, to turn all nations from idols *to serve the living and true God.*

There never was any man that appeared so great a lover of God as He was. There never was any man that made such manifestations of all the divine attributes and perfections of God to the world before Christ. From Him we have learned how just, how good, how wise, how faithful, and how powerful God is. He teaches us inwardly to honor God (John v. 23), to love Him also, and that "with all our heart, and all our soul, and our mind, and all our strength" (Mark xii. 30); and to fear Him, seeing that He can cast both body and soul into hell (Luke xii. 5); to confide likewise, and trust in Him, the living God (1 Tim. iv. 10); "to hope in His mercy" (1 Pet. i. 21), and to rejoice always (1 Thess. v. 16); and especially to *show the death of the Lord*, that is, to publish it with thanks and praise, until He come (1 Cor. xi. 26) to judge the world. He has taught us that the Father will be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John iv. 23); and when we pray, we must forgive others (Mark xi. 25); and "ask in prayer, believing" (Matt. xxi. 22); and avoid vain babbling; and

not affect much speaking, nor desire to be seen by men; and to join alms with our prayers and devotions to God (Matt. vi.). It is impossible to conceive anything more divine than these instructions.

No wit of man can think of anything more holy than the perfect rule which comprehends the measures of charity: *Love thy neighbor as thyself;* or that *whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* This is a rule that reaches all men; and compendiously, yet completely, tells them how they should behave themselves toward each other. He teaches to be meek and gentle toward all men; to put away all bitterness and anger, and clamor and evil speaking; not to circumvent our brother in any matter; nor to lie to our neighbor; to forgive their faults; to do good for evil; to bless those that curse us.

He has told us, by His apostles, with what kindness and indulgent affection husbands should treat their wives, and how, again, they should so affectionately observe their husbands that they may together make up a lively image of that dearest love which is between Christ and His Church. And He has instructed all how to behave ourselves toward magistrates, bishops, priests, masters, and parents, whom He has also taught how to bring up their children; to use their servants, to feed and govern their flocks, and to rule their people committed to their charge; so that no man can say he goes without that lesson which is proper for his condition. His doctrine is so holy and pure that it requires the greatest moderation in all things. It favors nothing that relishes covetousness, or ambition, or voluptuousness, or any other violent or inordinate passion whatever; but, on the contrary, commands us not to labor

with too much eagerness and solicitude for the meat that perishes; to lay up our treasures in heaven; to be humble and lowly, like little children; to be temperate in all things; to be watchful and vigilant; to be chaste and pure in heart—in a word, to cut off our right hand and pluck out our right eye, if it prove an offence to us.

After all these incomparable lessons, He teaches us to suffer for well-doing; to bear all worldly troubles valiantly, and with a magnanimous heart; nay, to rejoice when our names are cast out as evil for His name's sake; to persevere and suffer long patience; to stand fast in faith; to quit ourselves like men, and to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. He urges us by the purest, the most spiritual, the noblest, and the most divine arguments.

He does not promise us riches or greatness, or fame and glory, either while we live, or when we are dead; but propounds His own example to us, and the example of all the saints who are gone before us; and quickens us with the hope of immortality when we depart this life; assures us the protection of angels, and the joys of the Holy Ghost. And if any man say, that several philosophers taught excellent things, and gave rules of a virtuous life, the answer is that none of them delivered such a complete rule of holy living as our Lord has done; none of them touched the heart with such powerful reasons and divine motives; nor did any of them write without some mixture of folly, or themselves exactly perform that which they taught others. The purity of His life outstripped all others. He not only preached after the manner I have now related, but so He lived, and became a complete pattern of that which He taught. He was a living Law, as Lactantius calls Him (Liber 4, Instit. c. 25).

His greatest enemies could lay nothing to His charge, but only certain *words*, and these such as contained most perfect truth, as He proved by His actions. He was the Lamb of God, *without spot*, and *without blemish* (1 Pet. i. 19). His whole life was such a fair example of that piety, humility, charity, gentleness, forgiveness, peaceableness, patience, and all other virtues which He taught, that God restored Him to life again after they had crucified Him and put Him to death, because there was no fault in Him. And as for His fortitude, courage, constancy, and resignation, there never was anything comparable to them. For He endured the cross, and despised the shame, and contentedly took the contradiction of sinners, saying: *Father, not my will, but Thy will be done.*

When the Pharisees made void the law of God; when virtue was despised; when faith and judgment, and the love of God were hated; when there was nothing but the very dregs of Abraham's piety remaining among his children; then Jesus testified to them that their deeds were evil; then this light shone in that darkness, and this Son of God entered upon a more than herculean labor of cleansing the Temple and people. Nobody could accuse Him for the breach of any commandment that had a divine stamp upon it. When they quarrelled with Him for healing on the Sabbath-day, He soon stopped their mouths by showing them that they themselves would not deny such charity to an ox, or an ass, upon that day, if it were in danger of perishing, or stood in need to be led away to watering.

To do the will of God was the end for which He came into the world, as He told Pilate, that He might bear witness to the truth, and therefore it was His

meat, His delight to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work.

His holy doctrine and life was an argument of His divinity because this was part of His doctrine, that He was the *Son of God*. This is certain, He affirms Himself to be the Christ, the Son of God, first to His disciples, and that both before His sufferings (Matt. xiv. 16, 17) and also after His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 46), and then to others also who were as yet none of them, as (1) to the woman of Samaria (John iv. 26); then (2) to the blind man whose eyes He opened (John ix. 35–37); and lastly, He asserted it when He was brought before His judges who adjured Him by the true God to tell them the very truth, and nothing but the truth. He solemnly and frequently before God and before men, in His lifetime and after His death, professed that He was the Son of God.

If any man still object, that although Christ could not affirm what He did not believe, but yet He might be mistaken and believe that which was not true: He may answer Himself from His own concessions; how free our Saviour was from all ambitious desire; how modestly He refused to be advanced; how void He was of all worldly appetites which may blind man's reason and abuse his understanding; how admirably He discourses, how rational and convincingly; how sublime and heavenly all His sermons are; He will soon be satisfied that it is not credible that a person of His wisdom should be ruled by mere fancy, or be carried into a vain dream by any sensual affections which had no place in Him.

This is the first acceptation of the word *water*, which clears our Lord from all imputation of fraud, and

washes off all aspersions that might be cast upon Him of imposture. For there is not the least spot of blemish in the whole course of His life to render Him suspected of any guile, much less of so great a deceit as to feign Himself the Son of God. Nay, His doctrine is so divine, so much beyond the strain of the wisest men that ever spoke, that it demonstrates He was as little obnoxious to be deluded Himself, as He was inclined and disposed to delude others.

Let us now proceed to see what testimony may be drawn from this water in behalf of our Lord, if we take it in the other sense, for baptism, in which we make a profession of purity. And there is a twofold baptism in which our Lord is said to come: The first is the baptism of John; the second is His own baptism.

When St. John baptized men with water, he preached that He (the Messias) was coming (Matt. iii. 11 and John i. 30), and that He sent this baptism a little before Him, as a testimony which would *prepare His way*, and dispose their hearts to receive Him as the Christ of God. For it is manifest that it was intended as a proof of this, from those words of our Saviour Himself by which He stopped the mouths of the Pharisees, and took away all matter of cavil from them when He asserted both His supreme authority over them and over their temple (Matt. xxi. 23–26). Having come in triumph to Jerusalem (ver. 8, 9), and there received *Hosannas* from old and young, and been saluted as the *Son of David;* that is, their king (whom the prophet said should come unto them—verse 5); and having cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple (verse 12) and being now teaching the people there, the chief priests and elders came to Him, and examined Him, by *what*

authority He did these things, and *who gave* Him this *authority*.

Answer me but this question, says He, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: Whence was John's baptism? from heaven or from men? That is, who gave him his power to preach, to reprove, to call men to repentance? Did God bid him go? or was it from a motion of his own? If they had affirmed that John entered upon the office of baptizing and preaching by the commission of men: in this opinion they knew they should be alone, because all the people held him to be a prophet. That is, it was the sense of the whole nation (as appears by Josephus) that the Baptist was a divine man inspired by God, and sent by Him to do what he did, which would have made them the public scorn and hatred of all the country if they should have denied it. But if they should grant this and say He was sent by God, they saw themselves in a worse case, being as much afraid of what Jesus would say if this were confessed, as they were of what the people would say if it were contradicted. For as the people would have cried shame on them if they had disparaged John's ministry, so if they allowed it to be from heaven then they knew Jesus would incontestably prove His commission to be from heaven too; and tell them that John, whom they took for a divine man, should acquaint them with His authority and from whom He had it; for He bore witness in express words He was the Christ, the Son of God. They thought it a safer course, therefore, to leave this question undetermined, and say *they could not tell* whence his baptism was. But by saying nothing they plainly confessed that if they had gone on to dispute with Him, He would have had the better

of them. My authority, which you call in question, is very evident. I have it from heaven, and not from men, as I prove by this argument. If the baptism of John be from heaven, then from thence I come now you cannot deny it, if you will speak out, that this baptism is from thence; and therefore I make the conclusion that my authority is divine. If John was sent by God, then so was Jesus in that quality wherein He appeared, because John gave testimony to Him which could not be questioned after they had granted him to be a prophet (Mark xi. 32); nay, he was not a common prophet, but one of extraordinary rank: *the prophet of the Highest*, his father calls him, and more than a prophet, in the language of our Saviour. John the Baptist, whose heavenly authority they dare not deny, told them the very end of his preaching and baptizing was *to prepare the way of the Lord*, and that they must receive Him as *the Son of God*, and *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world* (John i. 29–34).

Let the place be noted where Jesus came to be baptized by John, for it will help to settle this belief in us, that Jesus is the Son of God. It was in Bethany beyond the Jordan, as John has recorded (John i. 28). "Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan unto John to be baptized by him" (Matt. iii. 13). The children of Israel went over this river Jordan when they entered the Land of Canaan. This was the place of their passage when God brought them out of the wilderness to their desired possession; and so had the name Bethania affixed to it, in memory of so great a blessing.

Now Jesus was baptized at the very place where Josue or Jesus (as He is called, Heb. iv. 8) conducted the children of Israel over that river into their rest. It

was a notable sign that this person called Jesus also was He that should lead them into the heavenly rest, and be the Captain of their salvation. And the Holy Ghost descended also in this very place upon Him; here He was anointed to be the *guide*, and *leader*, and *conductor* of God's people, that is, a *Prince and Saviour* (Acts v. 31), who should put them in possession of the greatest blessings. As Moses laid his hands upon Josue near this place, and made him the ruler and governor of that nation (Deut. xxxiv. 9), so here did God Himself give all things into the hands of Jesus by the Holy Ghost coming down upon His Head, appointing, constituting, and ordaining Him to be the Royal Prophet who should bring all the world to His obedience; to be the true Josue whom they must all follow; the Messias, the King of Israel, to whose conduct they must trust, if they meant to enter into rest. Jesus also is said to baptize (John iii. 26, and iv. 1). Now this was an argument to the Jews that He was the Messias.

First, because all expected that the Messias or Christ should come with baptism, and, therefore, *renew the world*, as the Hebrew doctors sometimes speak. It began in the time of Moses, when he brought them to receive the Law from God (Exod. xix. 10–14). And therefore when Christ came, and with Him a *new world* (for there is nothing more common in their books than to call His days *the world to come*), they concluded He should begin it with baptism as Moses did that frame of things which he erected.

This is certain, that in His days there should be an universal baptism and cleansing of the people, which they gather from Zech. xiii. 1; Isaias, and from Ezek. xxxvi. 25, where he says, "I will pour upon you clean

water," etc., "and I will give you a new heart," which is applied by the apostles to the days of Christ, who began His new kingdom with *washing with water*, or baptism in His Name.

And there is another argument to prove that the priests and Levites looked upon baptism as a mark of the Messias; for as soon as our Saviour began to authorize His disciples to baptize, then they were more in suspense than ever; and they knew not what to imagine, when they saw two great men doing one and the same thing, and thereby drawing the people after them.

We read in St. John iii. 25, that there arose a controversy between some of John's disciples and some Jews who were not his disciples, concerning *Purification*. And the dispute was this: whether their Master, John's baptism, or that of Jesus was the best, and which of them a Jew should receive? For they saw them both baptize. If John's baptism was from Heaven, why should it be laid aside, or why should another come and take his work out of his hand? To this John answers in verse 27, "A man cannot receive anything unless it be given him from heaven." That is, let not this trouble you, that Jesus baptizes, and all come to Him; it is no more than I told you, that I was nobody in comparison to Him. For no man can honestly assume more authority to himself than his commission gives him. And he adds that it is strange that they should forget what He had told them in express words (verse 28): "You yourselves do bear me witness that I said, I am not Christ; but that I am sent before Him." I never gave you any occasion to fancy me to be as great as He; but I told you plainly, as you yourselves may remember,

that I was not your king anointed by God to rule over you; all the honor that I had being no more than this, to be ordered to come and prepare His way for Him. I never intended that my washing you with water or gathering disciples should be a mark that I was the Christ. I only baptized with the water of repentance, that you might be disposed to believe in Him, who I told you was coming. Go and be baptized by Him, for He brings a nobler baptism than that of mine, being as much above me as the bridegroom at the wedding is above him who only waits upon him, and prepares things belonging to the marriage.

Question no more, therefore, to whom you should go for purification of your sins, nor think it strange that He baptizes more than I. For "He must increase, but I must decrease" (verse 30). For there is as much difference between our doctrines as there is between heaven and earth (verse 31). For as he concludes, *everlasting life* is the portion of him who believes in Jesus Christ; "but if a man believes not, *he shall never see life*, but *the wrath of God abideth on him*" (verse 36).

It is as certainly true that God will take us to be His sons and daughters, that *He will dwell in us* and give us everlasting life, as it is that Jesus is the Son of God. He that says the one, says the other too; and He may be alike believed in both.

"Having, therefore, these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting sanctification in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1). And this was the end for which the Son of God "delivered Himself up that He might sanctify and cleanse His Church by the laver of *water* in the Word of Life" (Ephes. v. 25, 26). Which, if we study sin-

cerely, then this water here spoken of, is part of the *waters of life;* and this testimony gives us assurance that we shall have our share in those eternal good things which He has promised in His Holy Gospel: For He is the Truth, and in Him there is no lie.

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE BLOOD.

The evidence of this next witness—that is, *the Blood*—is as strong as the former. By this word everybody understands the *sufferings* and *death* of Jesus Christ when His Blood was shed upon the cross, in a most ignominious manner. From the very day when the Pharisees saw Him baptize so many disciples, their rankest hatred and malice never ceased till they had baptized Him with His own Blood (Luke xii. 50).

Christ Himself, in His discourse before Pontius Pilate just before His crucifixion, and when He stood before him condemned by the Jews for saying He was the *Son of God*, expressly affirms that "for this He was born, and for this He came into the world, that He should give testimony to the truth" (John xviii. 37); particularly this truth, that He was indeed a King, the very Son of God. God the Father had appointed Him to *seal* this with His Blood, and to attest it in the most solemn manner before the world, that He was the Christ.

Many causes of death were industriously sought for, and sundry false witnesses boldly rose up against Him, and yet none of their testimonies was equal to the charge that was brought against Him. There was nothing of sufficient weight to justify a sentence of death,

which they were desirous to pronounce upon Him, and therefore they despaired of attaining their end, unless they could have such words out of His own mouth as would prove Him a blasphemer, for which they might justly condemn Him. "Which of you," says Christ, "shall convince me of sin?" (John viii. 46). They must either prove Him a sinner, or *themselves*, for apprehending Him without a cause; they were unable, by their false witnesses, to fasten any crime upon Him which would touch His life. All they could find to warrant a sentence so heavy was nothing but what they got out of His own mouth; by adjuring Him, in the name of God, to tell them whether He were the Christ.

His affirming this was the only truth they told Pilate when they brought Him into his court—that He made *Himself Christ, the King* (Luke xxiii. 2; John xix. 7). This was the inscription over His head, the title upon the cross: *This is the King of the Jews.* This was the thing they scoffed at, and taught the soldiers to mock Him after He was condemned by Pilate (Mark xv. 18), and which the Chief Priests, with the Scribes and Ancients, made the subject of their jeers as He hung upon the cross (Matt. xxvii. 40, 41, 42, 43). Read all these places, and you will see that, the asserting of this being the cause of His sufferings and shame, St. John had reason to allege His Blood as a great evidence or witness to this truth.

Now, for the confirmation of this testimony, let the following things be distinctly considered:

First. That blood is the life of every living creature, and therefore the pouring out of this is the losing of one's life. Common observation teaches us that it is the vehicle or chariot wherein the spirits ride their cir-

cuit round the body; and that if it lose its way, and run out of the body, all motion ceases, the spirits flying away together with it.

Second. That nothing is so sweet as life, and that, of all other things, we naturally abhor death. "All that a man hath he will give for his life" (Job ii. 4).

Third. Life, therefore, being so desirable, and death so dismal and frightful, no reasonable man will be persuaded to part with the one, and run headlong into the other. Is life such a trifle, is it so contemptible, that a serious man, and one that need not be miserable, will studiously lose it only to be talked of?

Fourth. Much less would any man, that is not beside himself, die for a lie. If any man should be tempted to tell a lie, yet what should tempt him to endure the rack —yea, to suffer death—for it when he shall gain nothing by it, and he might live far more honorable by telling the truth? We all love life, and when a man will give all that he hath for it (as the tempter himself said), it were very strange if he should not part with a vain lie that he might enjoy it. And therefore the apostle here bids us consider this, that Jesus came not by *water* only, but by *water* and *blood.* That is, He did not only *preach* this, and by His *holy life* justify His integrity in what He said, but He *died* to attest this, and make it good.

Fifth. If He would but have denied this one thing, and said that He was not the Son of God, all their malice, as I said, would not have found a crime great enough to warrant the taking away of His life according to their law.

Sixth. After *the assembly of the wicked had inclosed Him,* as the Psalmist speaks, had He not power to break through them, and make His escape? Yes, most as-

suredly; for what else is the meaning of these words, that the band of men which came to apprehend Him *went backward* and *fell to the ground* (John xviii. 6), when He said to them that He was the Man whom they sought for? Had not He power as well to depart as to weaken their hands that they could not approach Him? Nay, was it not far easier to go away Himself than to make them lie prostrate there? No doubt of it; only He would stand to it, and make it good by His Blood that He was the Son of God. His death was a voluntary sacrifice; *He laid down His life* of His own accord, and *no man took it from Him* (John x. 18).

Seventh. His death was an advised thing, and His Blood deliberately shed, to obtain the greater belief to Him; because He professed, again and again (though He knew He must die for it), that He was *Christ, their King.*

Eighth. He again sets His seal to this truth, calling God His Father twice, as He hung upon the cross: First, when He prayed for His enemies, *Father, forgive them* (Luke xxiii. 34), and then when He prayed for Himself, *Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit* (verse 46); with these words He resigned up His soul to God.

His death plainly proved that He believed Himself to be the Son of God, and His resurrection makes us certain that He was not deceived. These two, therefore, must be joined together to make up a complete evidence; and so they are, for the witness of the Spirit contains the resurrection in it.

Ninth. The principal thing which His Blood testified was that He did not invent His doctrine Himself. It proved, likewise, that His doctrine was true, and ought

to be believed by us. When He was but a child, He amazed the principal men of the nation with His questions and answers. And afterward, in the whole course of His preaching, there appeared nothing but what declared a most prudent, sober, and excellently-composed mind; nothing of inequality and unevenness of His temper; no rapturous discourses, or ecstatical expressions; nothing of melancholy, or of pride and vanity, but the greatest gravity and seriousness, mixed with admirable sweetness and humility, is the plain character of our Saviour. Look over all His doctrine, and where shall we find any that ever spoke so clearly, and with so much majesty, of righteousness, temperance, charity, and piety, of all our duties toward God and man, as He did? He had the gift of comprehending much in a few words; of illustrating His doctrine with apt and familiar resemblances; of confirming it with powerful arguments; and of confuting all cavils of His adversaries with the strongest reasons.

The whole synagogue wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. They inquired one of another, how a man could come by all that wisdom who had no learned education. His adversaries were often silenced by His answers. They found themselves so nonplussed, that they dared not ask Him any more questions, merely for fear of being more confounded—all which is a sufficient evidence that He knew very well what He said, and understood His doctrine, and was a person of clear reason; who could not be abused by the impostures of fancy and imagination.

Tenth. The holiness of His doctrine; His conquests over the devil plainly showed that He was in favor with God. His disciples were too strong for the devil. These

are the words of St. John in his Epistle, ii. 14: "I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one." The more the doctrine of Christ was propagated, the more was the kingdom of the devil overthrown, and all his cheats detected and discovered; all impiety was plucked up by the roots; all superstitious devices, all magic, all divination wherewith he had long since gulled and cozened the world and kept them in idolatry, were presently vanquished. There is an excellent discourse concerning this in St. Athanasius' book, concerning the *Incarnation of the world*. These few words of it must here be transcribed: "Who then let it be considered, and how great is this Christ? who by His name and presence obscures and abolishes all things everywhere; and alone prevails over all, and fills the whole world with His disciples? Let the Gentiles that blush not to deride and laugh at us, tell me whether He be a mere man who does these things. If He be, why do they not blush to see one man stronger than all their gods? How came He to demonstrate by His power that they are nothing? But if they will call Him a magician, let them tell me again how it comes to pass that He destroys all magic, and doth not rather establish it."

So our Saviour lays open all the devil's frauds, and discovers his wiles, and delivers men from all his subtile impostures. And the truth is, His adversaries never took Him for a vain enthusiast or for a man that was ignorantly deceived. And His cross, which proved the laughter of the Gentiles, and the stumbling-block of the Jews, honored Him in the world as the Son of God. It remains that our Saviour by His very death

proved and confirmed the truth of what He preached. He first came by *water* and then He came by *blood*. And as His blood proves He did not abuse us with that which He knew to be false; so the water, His holy doctrine and life, proves that He had no flaw in His understanding, nor was abused Himself with any fancies or illusions, when He took Himself to be the Son of God, that He sealed it with His precious blood.

Eleventh. And it ought to be considered, also, that it was prophesied by the holy men of God, that their Christ should suffer and be despised by men, and be in nothing more remarkable than in His sorrows. And, therefore, His Blood was a sign to those who believed those prophecies, that Jesus was the Christ, especially His Blood so disgracefully shed, because He appeared hereby as well as by other marks, to be the person whom all their inspired men pointed at and foretold should be their King. For the descriptions they have left of the cruel usage and horrible sufferings of the Messias or Christ answered to the life and were exactly fulfilled in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Hence it is that when He had ended all His sufferings, He said: *It is consummated* (John xix. 30), and so *bowed His head* and *gave up the ghost*. By which words (it is consummated) He bade them mark that now all things that were written of Him in Psalm xxi. and Isaias liii., and other places of their holy books, were perfectly fulfilled, and received so punctual completion in Him, that there remained nothing more to be done, but only to die. He had done all His Father's will, and finished His whole work, and having no further business here, He worshipped God that sent Him, and departed the world to go to Him.

Twelfth. The accidents that happened at our Saviour's death, verified what He said concerning Himself. Let us only observe how the sun, contrary to its usual course, when the moon could not interpose itself between its light and them, was eclipsed three whole hours, as He was in His passion (Luke xxiii. 44, 45). And the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth quaked; and the rocks were rent; and the graves were opened; and the bodies of the saints that had slept arose, and went out of the tombs after His resurrection, and appeared unto many in the holy city (Matt. xxvii. 51–53).

And when the Centurion and those that were under him, saw the earthquake and the things that were done, they feared greatly, saying: "Indeed this was the Son of God" (verse 54). Thus was that fulfilled which our Saviour had foretold: "When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man (upon the cross), then shall you know that I am He (that is, the Christ), and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me these things I speak" (John viii. 28). God declared that He was never better *pleased* with Him, than when He laid down His life in this manner, to testify to the truth.

Thirteenth. In the whole process against Him before His condemnation to the cross, there were the plainest marks of His innocence. After the chief priests had bound Him and led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, who as soon as he had examined Him whether He was the King of the Jews, and received our Saviour's answer, that He was (Matt. xxvii. 11), Pilate presently discerned that it was no earthly kingdom, and said to the chief priests, and to the people, "I find no cause in this man" (Luke xxiii. 4). This

nettled them very much to hear Him pronounced innocent, whom they had judged guilty of the highest crime; they endeavored to make good their charge and said He *stirred up the people* to sedition. Pilate devised many means to deliver Him, because as he told them, neither he nor Herod could find any fault in Him which should make Him worthy of death (Luke xxiii. 13, 14, 15). The Jews preferred a notorious villain who had committed murder in an insurrection (verses 17, 18, etc.). Pilate asked them indeed (which was unbecoming a judge), *what he should do with Jesus, that is called Christ* (verse 22), as if His accusers, not he, were to determine His punishment. But he yet asked them also again and again, no less than three times, *Why, what evil hath He done?*

They cried out as loud as thy could: "Crucify Him, crucify Him." "Take Him you," said he, "and crucify Him, for I find no cause in Him" (John xix. 6). They form a new indictment against Him, and tell Pilate (verse 7) that if he could not find Him guilty of death according to the Roman laws, yet "by their law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." When Pilate therefore heard this that He called Himself the *Son of God* (which the Jews took for blasphemy), it put him into a greater fear than ever, and, therefore, he went back again in the hall, and asked our Saviour, *Whence art Thou?* (verse 9), to which our Saviour replied nothing, either because he was unworthy to hear, or incapable to understand so weighty a truth (read verses 10, 11, 12). Pilate would not pronounce the sentence against Him, till he had first in as public a manner pronounced Him innocent, and washed his hands of His blood. "For He took water," says St. Matthew

xxvii. 24, "and washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look you to it."

This very *water*, as well as the other I have mentioned, was a witness to Jesus, that His very judge thought Him guiltless, though He had openly confessed Himself the Son of God. Pilate tries again if he could move those obdurate hearts from their cruel resolution, saying: *Behold your King* (John xix. 13, 14). The Jews turned away their heads, and cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him (verse 15). "What," says he, "shall I crucify your King?" To which the chief priests immediately returned such an answer as stopped his mouth, and made him not dare speak one word more in His behalf. They reminded him of his duty to his master, saying: "We have no king but Cæsar." Then he delivered Him therefore unto them to be crucified (verse 16). "Pilate wrote a title" (showing the cause of His death), "and put it upon the cross" (verse 19), and the writing was, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*. They saw themselves plainly indicted by this title, in the face of the world, as the murderers of their King, which made them renew their petitions to *Pilate* that he would alter the inscription; and not write, *The King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews* (verse 21). But now Pilate grew as obstinate as they, and gave them this short answer, *What I have written, I have written* (verse 22).

That is, content yourselves, for the first writing shall stand, let the world make what they can of it. And there is no question but there was a divine providence in the business, that the cause of His death should be so expressed as that the Jews should be openly con-

demned and Jesus still cleared by Pilate even after he had not only given sentence against Him, but ordered it to be put in execution. All these things concurred to justify Him when His Blood was shed. The very title declared was to testify that He was *their King;* and told the world withal, that in the judgment of him, who was his judge, He was no deceiver, when He affirmed that He was *their King;* but the Jews, villainous traitors, who had crucified that person whom they ought to have honored and obeyed.

Fourteenth. For which the terrible vengeance of God followed them; and never left them till they had their own wish. His blood was required at their hands, and at the hands of their posterity. For they never prospered from that time forward. About forty years after, their city was besieged by those whom they had importuned to crucify our Saviour; the people of the nation banished; and their children became vagabonds even to this day. St. John lived to see the day of Christ's coming with power to execute judgment upon them; and His Blood, both upon the cross and upon their heads, is very fitly here alleged by the same apostle as a great *witness* that He was sent by God as His only Son. Pontius Pilate himself, though he was not so guilty as they who pursued Him out of hatred, yet he felt the weight of this crime, and was oppressed himself by false accusations which the Samaritans brought against him. Whereupon he was deprived of the government of Judea, and having lost the authority which he abused in condemning our Saviour, he was constrained, either by the grievous afflictions he endured, or by the command of Cæsar, to become his own executioner for all the crimes he had committed.

I shall conclude this argument with these two observations: *First*, That after our Saviour was dead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with his spear, *and immediately there came out blood and water* (John xix. 34). For the water and blood which flowed out of His side were an argument in favor of His Humanity, which some wicked heretics then denied, and testified also that He was truly dead, and not merely in appearance. But it must be observed that St. John is not here proving Jesus Christ to be a true Man, but something far greater and more excellent, viz., that He was God's Son. That water and blood, therefore, if they have any relation to these *witnesses* here mentioned, were only emblems and adumbrations of these two grand proofs of our Saviour being the Christ, viz., His purity and innocence, which appeared in His whole preaching and life, to which the *water* bears a resemblance; and His confession of the truth even unto death, which was lively represented by that *blood*. These two flowed from Him with such force that they have overspread the world with His faith; and the *knowledge of the glory of the Lord hath covered the earth, even like to the waters which covered the sea.*

The *second* observation is, that they who denied Him to be *the Christ*, after they had acknowledged it, are said to *tread under foot the Son of God,* and to esteem the Blood of the testament unclean (Heb. x. 29); which expression could not be justified, if the apostles had not looked upon His Blood as an unreprovable witness to Him. For the meaning is, that those men who fell back to their old religion again, and deserted Christianity, made nothing of the testimony which God had given of His Son. As for His resurrection, they did not give any credit to that, though so strongly attested, but *trod*

under foot the Son of God, as if He lay still in the grave; and as far as His Blood, which was shed at His death, they looked upon it as if it were common blood. They shall be judged worthy of *sorer punishments* than the contemners of Moses; because these men in effect made Jesus (who was infinitely greater than he) to be a mere impostor, a false prophet, and a blasphemer. They justified those that murdered Him, and *crucified the Son of God again* (Heb. vi. 6). This was the sense of every Christian apostasy. Now, it follows that His Blood testified His innocence (as I have shown), and was looked upon by others, as well as by St. John, to be a witness that He was the Son of God. Otherwise, they could not have been guilty of so great a crime, and fallen under such a heavy punishment, who despised His Blood and were no more moved by it than if it had been common, like the blood of one of the thieves that were crucified with Him.

Moses' covenant and law were sealed only by *the blood of bulls and goats*, and yet those men suffered death without mercy, who either fell away to other gods, or made void his law—by which we may judge, says the apostle, what they are like to suffer who renounced the Christian religion, which was confirmed by a much greater Person, and by a more noble Blood, even by the Blood of the Mediator of this better covenant. Now, if His Blood was not an argument to induce men to believe, and to continue in the state of Christianity, they could not be charged with such disrespect to it when they left this religion, nor be punished for scorning that which was of no force to tie them to the faith. But, if they were guilty of great contempt of it (having the knowledge of the truth), they became liable to far heav-

ier condemnation, "the dreadful judgment of God, and the rage of fire which shall consume the adversaries" (Heb. x. 27). In short, they who did not look upon His Blood as holy must condemn Him for a malefactor; but they that did confess the sacredness of it must needs acknowledge Him not to have been a criminal, as the Jews pretended, but the *Son of God*, as at His death He professed Himself.

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT.

I have abundantly demonstrated that the two former witnesses testified that Jesus was the Son of God; there is one more witness that still remains to be examined, viz., that of the *Spirit*. In the sixth verse, St. John gives this illustrious character of it: *It is the Spirit which testifieth that Christ is the truth.* The testimony of the Spirit is the most eminent of the three, because it excels the other two in clearness, and was always considered most powerful to prove a truth; it adds greater force unto the other two, and, together with them, makes up a most complete demonstration. For whatsoever defect any one may think is in the witness of the *water*, and of the *blood*, the *Spirit* perfectly supplies it, and proves beyond all doubt that a person who so lived and so died must needs be the *Son of God*.

Now, by the Spirit we are not to understand either the descent of the Spirit of God on our Saviour at His baptism, or the pouring of it upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost; for this was the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and that from heaven. But we are to understand thereby, *first*, the miracles, wonders, and signs wrought by our Saviour before He died; and *secondly*,

His more wonderful resurrection to life again, after He was crucified, dead, and buried.

There is a marked difference between the Holy Ghost and the Spirit. By the Holy Ghost seems commonly to be meant the gifts of tongues, of prophecy, of knowledge, of wisdom, of revelation, and such like; whereas, by the Spirit is generally meant the power of miracles, of healing diseases, casting out devils, feeding multitudes with very little food, and such like wonders. For we read that the Holy Ghost was not given while our Saviour lived (John vii. 39). And yet even then the apostles had the power of casting out devils, and healing all manner of diseases; which was a portion of that Spirit which our Saviour had without measure, but was not the Holy Ghost. Thus St. Peter says our Lord was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power (Acts x. 38), where by power is meant something distinct from the Holy Ghost; that which is here called Spirit, a faculty of doing wonders; as the other signifies a faculty of knowing the heart, of declaring the mind of God, and opening all the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

And thus in the Old Testament, where the Spirit of the Lord is said to come upon Othoniel (Judg. iii. 9), upon Gideon (vi. 34), upon Samson (xiii. 25; xiv. 6), they were made valorous and were endowed with great strength to achieve wonderful things above the power of man. And, indeed, in this consists one principal difference between the Holy Ghost and the Spirit: that the former consecrated men to the office of interpreting God's mind; but the latter did not: making them only valiant. What we are here to understand by the Spirit is, viz.: All wonderful things that our Lord *did*, and all that were *done* for Him upon the earth. For there is

no doubt but that the Holy Ghost and the Spirit are thus distinguished as they are here by St. John (the one being a witness in heaven, the other on earth).

His miraculous works were the first testimony of the Spirit, particularly casting out devils and raising the dead.

The prophet Isaias foretold that *Jesus being God's beloved, in whom His soul was well pleased*, would appear in this manner: for God, he says, would *put His Spirit upon Him*. This, St. Matthew applies to Jesus (xii. 18), just after He had cured a man who had his hand withered, which shows what he understood by the Spirit. And our Lord Himself also expounds the meaning of it in the following verse. For after the recital of that prophecy of Isaias, the evangelist relates immediately how He healed a man *possessed with a devil, blind* and *dumb* (verse 22), which the Pharisees spitefully ascribed to the power of the devil, and not of God. He confutes them by this argument, that then the devil would pull down his own kingdom. The Pharisees ought to have concluded from these miraculous works that if He by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then it was apparent the kingdom of God was come unto them. Here Christ both tells us what the Spirit signifies, viz., such a power as this of casting out devils; and also what was the end of giving the Spirit, viz., that they might know the *Messias* and His *kingdom* was come. That there was a mighty power in Him, His sworn enemies could not deny. The accusation of magic, which we find to this day in the Jewish books against Him, is an open acknowledgment that there were such miraculous things done as are recorded in the Gospel, which being granted, it is apparent the power that

wrought them was divine, and that the devil had no hand in the business. For how could the devil be supposed to assist in such operations unless we will conceive him to have so little wit as to contrive the most effectual way to overthrow his own authority? The very end for which our Saviour dispossessed devils, and did all other miraculous cures, was to win honor to God; whereas, the devil in all that he doeth hath the quite contrary drift. All the fury and madness of demons fled before Him at the mention of His name; we must confess that our Lord and Saviour was no demoniacal power, but the very Son of God, the Word, the Wisdom, and the Power of the Father; nay, He not only expelled *them* Himself, but gave His twelve apostles authority to cast them out, thereby showing He came to deliver men from the dominion of the devil, in that He gave the meanest men such power over him. "Go ye," says He, "and preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand; heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils; freely have you received, freely give" (Matt. x. 78). This was long before they received the Holy Ghost. And when He sent the seventy-two disciples afterward, though with a less portion of the Spirit than the twelve apostles had (Luke x. 9), when they returned back to give Him an account, they tell Him with no small joy: "Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name" (verse 17).

When the Pharisees accused our Saviour of confederacy with Beelzebub, "By whom," says He, "do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges" (Matt. xii. 27). There are those who are none of my disciples, but yours, that use my name for the casting out of devils, who immediately fly before them

(Mark ix. 37). What do you think of them? do they deal with Beelzebub? I know you will not pass such a judgment on your own disciples; and, therefore, this fact of theirs condemns your partiality, and proves my divine virtue. Nay, the devils themselves were so astonished at this power which they felt in His name that thereupon they acknowledged Him to be the Christ, when they confessed Him to be *the Holy One of God* (Mark i. 24). And so St. Luke expounds it (iv. 41).

The raising of Lazarus is a remarkable testimony to Jesus. Lazarus, after he had been dead four days, and was already so far putrified that his friends dissuaded our Saviour from having his tomb opened lest it should prove offensive to Him, for it never entered into the mind of any man to think that a person really dead, as Lazarus undoubtedly was, could be restored to life by any power but that which gives us life—the power of Almighty God. And therefore, our Lord plainly designed this as the last thing He could do for their satisfaction while He was on earth, to prove that He was the *Son of God*. St. John tells us that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When He had heard, therefore, that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days" (xi. 5, 6). One would think that he should have said, Therefore He began His journey presently into Judea, that He might come time enough to save him whom He loved. But He resolved quite the contrary, "because the Son of God was to be glorified by this sickness" (verse 4). Therefore He remained two days that Lazarus might be dead before He got to Bethania; and He might get more glory by his resurrection than He had received by healing the sick, and casting out such a number of devils. For this

proved that He had power not only to break, but utterly to *destroy* the *works* of *the devil*, and to tread him under foot who had the *power* of *death*.

This miracle wrought upon Lazarus was an evident token that Jesus was the Son of God. Now that our Saviour raised a dead man, there were many witnesses, for "many of the Jews who came to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him" (John xi. 45); and the fame of it was so great that it drew "a great multitude of the Jews to that place, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead" (Ibid. xii. 9). Nay, the Pharisees themselves could not deny this miracle (John xi. 47). But to extinguish the light and take away the convincing power of it, they thought it was best to remove Lazarus out of the way, and put him to death as well as our Saviour. For the sight of him converted a great many, as you read in xii. 10, 11. "And on the next day a great multitude went forth to meet Jesus, and cried: Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel" (verses 12, 13).

The proud, ambitious Pharisees saw the crowd of people following Him, and heard them applaud Him as the great *Son of David*, with their *Hosannas in the highest*. This made them despair of blasting His fame, as long as He lived; and therefore they grew more resolved that He should be put to death. For "they said among themselves: Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after Him!" (verse 19). Men of all nations, and not the Jews only, followed Him, and became His disciples, notwithstanding the scandal of the cross, which they had cast in their way to dis-

courage them. There immediately followed an illustrious presage; for certain Gentiles, desiring to see Jesus (verse 20), there came a voice from heaven upon His prayer that God would glorify His own name, saying, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again* (verse 28).

The glory of God had appeared in the raising of Lazarus, which had drawn many of the Jews to Him; and He promises shortly, by raising up Jesus from the dead, to draw also many such Gentiles as these to believe in His name.

We conclude this in the words of Cosri. This Jewish writer rightly notes that *learning still went along with the monarchies*, never being at a greater height than in the greatest empire, that of the Romans; and in the highest pitch of that empire when our Saviour appeared. Upon which account there cannot be any suspicion of fraud, in this or the rest of our Saviour's miracles, since they were not wrought in an ignorant age, nor in an obscure and barbarous nation, nor in some blind corner of the country; but openly, near a famous city (Jerusalem), where there were professors of wisdom, and in a time when men could easily distinguish between a real miracle and a mere delusion. This, therefore, ought to have opened their eyes to see who He was whose miraculous works they could not but see. And it is justly mentioned, to their eternal reproach, that "whereas He had done so many miracles before them they believed not in Him" (John xii. 37). For they could not with any color ascribe them to any power but that of God; who hereby told *them* what the voice from heaven told *Him*, that *this was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased.*

And truly, there can no good reason be given why the apostles should spend so great a part of the short history they have left of His life, in relating His miraculous works, if they had not known them to be evident things which all the country could witness, and likewise esteem them powerful demonstrations that He was the *Son of God;* which belief, if it were once rooted deeply in their hearts, the apostles knew, would irresistibly constrain them to be obedient to Him in everything. This is that which gives His words such authority, which makes them to sink into our hearts: a belief that our Creator speaks unto us by His mouth. They were well aware that it was no easy thing to persuade the world of this; for there is such a vast distance between God and us, that a man will be apt to think the majesty of heaven will not enter into such familiarity and friendship with flesh and blood as to talk with them. Now, to persuade the world of this belief, Jesus wrought miracles, inverted the course of nature, which can be done by none but Him that created all things. For, the first time the apostles made a solemn acknowledgment that He was the *Son of God*, was upon the working of a great miracle before Peter, James, and John, when they were with Him on the Holy Mount. He had fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes (Matt. xiv. 19). He overtook His disciples in the midst of the sea in the fourth watch of the night, and found them tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary (Matt. xiv. 24, 25). They were afraid at the first sight of Him, and imagined it was a ghost. But when He spoke to them, and said, "Be of good heart, it is I, fear ye not" (verse 27), Peter was desirous, if it were He, that He would call him to Him, and enable

him to walk upon the water with Him. And so he did, as if it had been firm land, till his heart began to fail him when he saw the wind boisterous. But then our Lord put forth His hand, and kept him from sinking; and both brought him safe to the ship and made a calm. Upon this, they that were in the ship came and adored Him, saying: *Indeed Thou art the Son of God* (verse 33). The sudden ceasing of the wind; His bearing up Peter, and making him walk with Him on the rough surface of the water; and His feeding also great multitudes with little provision; made them conclude that He was greater than any man ever was. Their minds were overcome by the mighty power of God in Him, which subdued their understandings perfectly to the faith, and so bowed and inclined their hearts that they could not but prostrate themselves at His feet, and acknowledge Him to be the anointed of God. They were now sure that He was the Son of God; and they were no easy people that believed lightly and foolishly, only out of love of novelty, or some such vain humor, but were convinced and overpowered by the hand of God, which was stretched out to work such wonders as these whensoever Jesus pleased.

And therefore Jesus had great reason to appeal to His apostles as one of His witnesses, when any disputed or doubted His authority. When the "Jews encircled Him, and said to Him: How long dost Thou hold our souls in suspense? if Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly" (John x. 24), "He answered them: I told you, and you believe not; the works that I do in the name of my Father, they give testimony of me" (verse 25). "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you will not believe me, believe the

works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the Father" (verses 37, 38). And so He tells all His apostles that the Jews were inexcusable upon this account, because they did not acknowledge Him for the Son of God, though He did such miracles as Moses and all the prophets never did (John xv. 24). "If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin (in not receiving Him as their Messias, the Son of God); but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." "But I have a greater testimony than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to perfect—the works themselves, which I do—give testimony of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John v. 36). Who could grapple with the devil, the prince of this world (John xii. 31), but only He who is God blessed forever, as Jesus appeared by these miraculous works to be? And it is very remarkable that He wrought His miracles frequently, just as God Almighty brings things to pass. *God*, says Moses, *said, Let there be light, and there was light*. He spoke, as the Psalmist's words are, *and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast*. In like manner did our Saviour say to the leper (Matt. viii. 3), "Be thou made clean," and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed; and to "the unclean spirit: Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee to go out of him; and the spirit cried, and came out of him" (Mark ix. 24, 25). And to Lazarus, Come forth; and he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; which was a remarkable evidence that indeed He was the Son of God, since He acted so like the Father Almighty.

It may be said, indeed, that Moses and some of the prophets wrought miracles; and yet cannot thence be

concluded to be persons of such quality. But their miracles were nothing in comparison to those of the Lord Jesus. St. John concludes his gospel by recording some of them: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written."

And here let us briefly observe the different way of proceeding for the establishing a religion instituted by men, and a religion whose author is God. When men make laws and settle a religion, whose origin is from their own minds, and devised by themselves; though they may pretend that it came from God, yet they are not able to make it take place without the sword, or the assistance of some prince, who by his authority shall cause it to be received. But a religion that is indeed divine, is planted in a divine manner. When laws are derived from God, He establishes them by His power, and overawes men by such wonders, as without any human force procure obedience. Thus the Jewish religion began; when the children of Israel were in grievous servitude, God sent Moses and Aaron armed with no power but that of working miracles, whereby the prince that kept them in bondage was forced to let them go. And in their journey they were conducted by the guidance of a bright cloud, and they passed through the sea, and they were fed with manna in the wilderness forty years; and saw one miracle after another, which convinced them they ought to submit to that Word of the Lord which Moses spoke unto them.

Now just as Moses proved his mission from God, so our Saviour likewise demonstrated that He was the Royal Prophet whom Moses foretold God would send

into the world. In an age, when they not only groaned under the Roman yoke, but were also superstitiously enthralled and grievously oppressed by the devil, God raised up a mighty salvation to them out of the house of His servant David.

Let us now proceed (having heard what the Spirit did by Him) to consider what wonderful things it did for Him, whereby it proved Him to be the Son of God.

The Spirit raised up Jesus from the dead, and not long after advanced Him into heaven to live forever with God. "He was put to death indeed in the flesh" (being mortal as we are), "but enlivened in the Spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18), that is, raised up again from the dead by that divine power in Him whereby He had raised up others before He died. When the disciples were fully persuaded of His Resurrection, then they add this as an argument of the greatest force to convince the world that He was the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind. This is the substance of St. Peter's first sermons to the Jews and Gentiles. Read but what he says to his crucifiers on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 22, 23, 24; x. 38, 39, 40).

The apostles had nothing to add beyond this, which was the greatest testimony of the Spirit to Him. Now it spoke with a loud voice in His behalf; for if He had not been God's Son, He would never have taken Him out of His grave, much less have advanced Him into the heavens, where it is manifested He now lived, by the coming of the Holy Ghost; which fell upon Cornelius and his friends, while St. Peter was speaking those words.

The Spirit, which St. John here says is the truth, openly declared, by restoring Him to life, that His blood was

most acceptable to God. It showed that it was no common thing, but the Blood of *the Holy One of God.* And if the Spirit could not be believed in this, it would have lost all credit; we could never have known anything by the greatest wonders it can work, if such things had been done for a deceiver, as is apparent were done for Jesus Christ.

Christ before He died, promised His apostles that He would rise again, and gave this also as a sign to all the people, whereby they should know that He was the Christ. For He tells His apostles that they should see Him betrayed and killed, but on the third day He should rise again (Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 22, 23; xx. 19; John xvi. 16). It was their custom in all ages, and with great reason, to ask for a sign that a man was sent by God, and, therefore, now that Jesus came with such authority as to redress many abuses and to reform that nation and temple, they asked Him, "What sign dost Thou show unto us, seeing Thou doest these things?" (John ii. 18).

He had given them sign enough already, and therefore makes no other answer but this: "Destroy this temple" (pointing to His body), "and in three days I will raise it up" (verse 19).

We have reason to conclude, as St. Paul did after he had seen Him alive, this is the very Christ. Upon this ground it was that the apostles so much rejoiced when they saw Him, again, as St. John tells us (ii. 22): "When therefore He was risen again from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this" (concerning the raising up the temple of His body) "and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had said."

This was the greatest sign, though He had done

more miracles than ever Moses and the prophets had done from the beginning; and many things in His lifetime to persuade the Jews that He was the Christ. But still they were so perverse as to ask for more signs: *Master, we would see a sign from thee* (Matt. xii. 38). And therefore our Saviour calls them "an evil and adulterous generation." The Scribes and Pharisees had evident tokens of a divine presence in Him. Why should He gratify men whom nothing would satisfy but *a sign from heaven*, which St. Luke says they demanded? Therefore He tells them *no sign shall be given them, but the sign of the prophet Jonas* (which was not a sign from heaven, but from the bowels of the earth). "For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (Matt. xii. 39, 40). Which was as much as to say: it is in vain to attempt to convince your corrupt minds by such means as these, and therefore I must tell you that the only means of opening your eyes and conquering your perverseness is my Resurrection. But if you still persist in unbelief when this is fulfilled, "the men of Ninive shall rise in judgment with you and condemn you; because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (verse 41).

The Jews, Scribes, and Pharisees now attempted to persuade the people that Jesus was not raised again. They were utterly undone, they knew, and must lose all their reputation with the people, if He was raised from the dead (because it would effectually prove what they denied), and therefore they hired the soldiers to say that His disciples stole Him away while they slept. A silly

story, a malicious slander which the Pharisees had devised. But the apostles of our Lord fully knowing the truth of the facts and the absurdity of the calumny, could not be deterred by punishment, from preaching *Jesus and resurrection.* And if they had any doubts remaining, this very tale helped to disperse them. But they were soon past all doubts by the coming of the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus sent them to witness the Resurrection. By this Jesus broke forth upon them in a fresh lustre; and like the sun rended all the clouds in pieces, illuminated not only them, but the whole world in a short space, with the beams of His glory.

I shall conclude, with the apostle St. Paul, that this piece of the mystery of godliness is, without controversy, *God manifested in the flesh;* justified in or by the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead; which warranted Him to be God manifested in our flesh; cleared Him from all malicious accusations of His adversaries; wiped off all the guilt which was cast upon Him; set Him before the eyes of the world as innocent and just, and made glorious and great even in His Blood (Heb. xiii. 20).

Now, to show more fully the greatness of this testimony of the Spirit, let us consider that speech of our Saviour: "Therefore I say to you: Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven" (Matt. xii. 31), which heavy doom St. Mark tells us was pronounced upon them, *because they said He had an unclean spirit* (iii. 30). This shows what the blasphemy was, in which, if they continued, there was no hope of pardon. For He, by the *Spirit of God, cast out devils* (as He tells them, verse 28);

then it was rank blasphemy, the highest degree of evil speaking and calumny, to impute these very cures and wonderful works to the power of the devil, which were wrought by that divine power. And this sin was therefore unpardonable, which shows how great this testimony of the Spirit is, because there were no means left to convince them that Jesus was the Son of God (without which belief their sins could not be forgiven), if they persisted not only in denying the authority of the Spirit, but were so bold as to blaspheme it. God Himself has no higher evidence to give them than this of His Spirit.

And thus our Saviour's meaning is expounded; if any one should speak a word against the Son of Man (that is, Him), despising Him because of His poor parentage, and calling Him the son of a carpenter, or such name—this, though blamable, might be pardoned, *propter corporis vilitatem*, as St. Hieronymus speaks; and should they call Him a *deceiver*, or a *seducer*, when they heard Him teach the people, it would not be unpardonable, because no man is to be believed merely upon his own word. But if, when these men saw the mighty works of the Spirit justify His preaching to be divine, they still continued to speak ill of Him, this was a very dangerous blasphemy; because they could not, after this, call Him a seducer or false teacher, but they must reproach the Holy Spirit as well as Him, and call that the work of the devil which was performed by the power of the Spirit of God. And when the Holy Ghost was come from heaven upon the apostles' witnesses that He was *quickened by the Spirit*, and by the same Spirit presented to God in the heavens, they still went on to speak evil of Him, then there was no hope of remission, be-

cause they blasphemed the last remedy for their recovery, which was the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven to persuade them to repent and believe in His name. Therefore, they that denied the testimony of the Holy Ghost, who had come down from heaven (after our Saviour's glorification) to bear witness that He was quickened by the Spirit, perished in their infidelity, there being nothing more to be done for the opening their eyes and persuading them that Jesus was the Son of God.

Thus I have done now with this last *witness on earth*, the Spirit, which concurs and agrees with all the former in this truth. The Blood of Jesus attested this before all the people; this was the title over His cross, that He was the King of the Jews; and this the Spirit said; it was the language of every one of His wonderful works, and of His resurrection also, and His enthronation (of which the Holy Ghost gave assurance); and expressly justified it to all the world. And, therefore, how can we choose but think this is a sure word [that He is the Son of God] which is established out of the mouth, not of two or three, but of twice three witnesses of unquestionable credit. And these three last ought to be very carefully considered, because they were on *earth*, and upon that account nearer to us.

The testimony of the Father is certain, because it was heard by several excellent persons; yea, once by a multitude of people. That of the Word also is infallible, and we cannot with any reason doubt whether there was such evidence, because St. Stephen, St. Paul, St. John, were persons of unspotted reputation, who heard it, and also did and suffered the hardest things upon the credit of it. That the Holy Ghost also fell upon Him at His

baptism, a great prophet so confidently affirmed that it was profaneness to deny it. But yet, excepting the testimony of the Holy Ghost after His ascension, there were none of those witnesses in heaven heard by so many as these three last mentioned, who, as St. John says, bear witness on earth.

It was a remarkable thing that no man could fasten the suspicion of any crime upon our Saviour, but the cry of the people was like that when "He opened a blind man's eyes, He hath done all things well" (Mark vii. 37). And as for His Blood, the second witness on earth, that was shed in the face of the sun, at a great feast, when from foreign countries they were assembled at Jerusalem. All the incidents which attended His death were things that never have been contradicted. No man then had the impudence to deny the eclipse of the sun, the earthquake, the rending of the veil of the Temple, and the rest of the astonishing things that then happened. The first of them is mentioned by a pagan writer; and as for His miraculous works, they were generally done openly, at feasts, in the synagogue, on the highways; and were so commonly talked of that the rulers feared all the world would run after Him (John xii. 19). Therefore the apostles could not falsify in the report of these things, lest they might be easily confuted, which no man ever attempted, but both Jews and Gentiles acknowledged that He wrought miracles, for His apostles wrought them everywhere, and so did their successors in ages after. To these the ancient as well as later Christians appeal, as an undoubted testimony of their faith. His resurrection also was attested by five hundred people who saw Him, together, at once; and it was proved beyond contradiction by the strange

descent of those miraculous gifts upon His apostles, according to His promise; which came upon them when all the nation were assembled together to be witnesses of it. Yea, the apostles themselves went over all the world, and openly showed the power of Jesus which was in them.

Now, if you grant there were such witnesses, which no sober man can deny (they being visible here on earth), there can be no doubt remaining of this, that *Jesus is the Son of God.* They proclaim this so loudly with one voice that St. John had reason to say, *We saw His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* They beheld it in His preaching and life; they beheld it in His bloody death, but especially in the power of His Spirit, both before He died, and in raising Him up again from the dead; and they beheld it also when they were with Him on the holy mount, and had the testimony of the rest of the heavenly witnesses, which were heard on earth though they were in heaven, as men of high quality and unblemished integrity did constantly affirm. Having received the Holy Ghost they were able to demonstrate His resurrection. For "with great power did the apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord" (Acts iv. 33). And the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the most powerful witness that He was the Son of God.

ETERNAL LIFE.

"And this is the testimony that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."—1 JOHN v. 11.

ETERNAL LIFE IN GENERAL.

THERE is more contained in these two words, *eternal life*, than all the world can discover. But we have the Church of God to steer our course, in whose teaching, derived from the sacred Books and the holy Fathers, it is most certain that it signifies a full and constant enjoyment of all the happiness which our being is capable to receive.

And this life is called by our Saviour *seeing God* and *beholding His glory*, and *being with our Lord*, which are names of such transcendent greatness that we had needs enjoy this happiness to understand them. Let us, therefore, here reflect before we search in the meaning of this phrase, which is the sublimest and the most comprehensive of all other whereby this eternal life is described to us.

And the least that can be meant by it is, that we shall dwell in His House in heaven, where there are so many mansions. There the angels are said to *stand* before God, to *behold the face of our heavenly Father*; and therefore we shall *see God*, and shall be more like angels than men if we shall be accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection from the dead" (Luke xx. 35).

"We are now sons of God," says St. John, that is in

a state of great favor with Him, but we have far greater things in hope; "it hath not yet appeared what we shall be" (1 Epist. iii. 12). The meaning of these last words is this: That the manner wherein we shall be the *sons of God* in the other world is not now manifest. St. John tells us that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, it being natural that the child should bear resemblance to its Father.

From hence it follows, that to see God is to enjoy such favors as He will be pleased to impart unto us in that holy place where He dwells. For to see, in the language of the Hebrews, is to enjoy when it is applied to a thing desirable. Thus, to see good (Psal. xxxiii. 13) is to possess it; and "to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living" (xxvi. 13) is to be delivered by God, and to enjoy the sweet fruits of it before dying. And that, likewise, which is said to be seen in one place is said to be tasted in another; as to see death (John viii. 51) is the same as *tasting of death* (verse 52), which is a demonstration, that *to see* in their language is frequently used for the sense of perception or enjoyment of any object.

And since we can enjoy nothing without a preceding knowledge of it, we are to understand that to see God as He is will be to have our minds filled with a knowledge of Him, so clear, so DISTINCT, AND STRONG, that it will even turn us into His own nature, life, and bliss. We shall not know Him as we do now, by similitudes, resemblances, and expressions borrowed from other things, but by a clear knowledge of Him wherein our hearts will be infinitely pleased. God will dwell in them, and they shall be possessed of Him, of His life, of His joys, by having a sensible perception of the wis-

dom, the goodness, the purity of all the perfections that shine in Himself.

And when our Lord prays that His disciples may *see His glory* (John xvii. 24), His meaning is, that they might have their share at last with Him in His happiness, and be admitted to take a part with Him in that supreme dignity to which He was ready to be advanced. And thus, when St. John invites others into the Christian Church, telling them that "their fellowship was with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). It is the singular privilege of CHRISTIAN PEOPLE to be admitted unto a partnership with God and our Saviour in their most happy life, and to have hopes and expectation to partake with them in their eternal bliss.

We shall understand the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, which now the sense of our weakness forbids us to pry into, and be able to unfold how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one, without any diversity or separation of nature (as St. Austin expresses this mystery). And St. Basil had taught us to mark this in those words of our Saviour: "My sheep hear my voice" (John x. 27); they *hear*, not *question* or *dispute*. They believe He is the word of God, but do not ask how, nor say: if He was always, then He was not begotten; or, if He was begotten, then He was not always. These are not the words of the sheep of Christ, who receive His voice and inquire no farther.

We believe one divine nature in three Persons; and that the divine nature in the Person of the Father required satisfaction for the transgressions of men against His holy laws, and that the same divine nature in the Person of the *Son* undertook to make satisfaction for us, in taking our nature on Him, whereby He had by

right of consanguinity the authority and power of redeeming us; and the same divine nature in the Person of the Holy Ghost approved and sealed this happy and ever BLESSED COMPROMISE. And therefore, if our Saviour pronounced His disciples blessed, because their eyes saw and their ears heard such things as the prophets and just men had longed to see and hear, but could not attain that happiness, how much more blessed shall we find ourselves when we come to see things as much beyond what is now manifested as this revelation is beyond the ignorance of former ages? We shall both wonder at our childish presumption in offering to talk of things so much above our reach, and wonder at the grace of the ever blessed Trinity, which hath conducted us notwithstanding to the sight of their undivided glory.

But the body as well as the soul will be admitted to share with Him in those supreme felicities. We shall live in that place where *He dwells in light unapproachable* by mortal men; in the company of holy angels, who, as so many stars of glory, will add, if it be possible, to the splendor of that place; and with our Blessed Saviour, God-man, whose glorified Body we shall behold. And so behold it, that we shall *bear the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthly.* We shall be made immortal, that is, we shall be *ever with the Lord* in such glorious bodies as His is; so that in ourselves we may see the glory of God.

ETERNAL LIFE IN PARTICULAR.

It concerns us more than anything else to understand the *everlasting life,* that Jesus Christ should give us, after our short labors or sufferings here. I shall ven-

ture to explain as clearly as I can, these two words, *life* and its *eternal* duration.

Life is nothing else but the exercise of all those faculties and powers which are proper and peculiar to us, upon their true and natural objects.

Man consists of soul and body as his essential parts; and the soul, as the better part, must be considered in this state of bliss; and from it bliss will be derived to the body. The several faculties and operations of our own souls shall be enlarged, and their force increased by the mighty change which shall be made in us at death and at the resurrection. Those faculties thus improved, we shall be able to frame in our mind some distinct apprehension of this *blessed life*. Now we all know there are two faculties of our soul, the *understanding* and the *will*, upon which all operations depend; and it is as certain, that the satisfaction and felicity of the understanding can consist in nothing but in knowledge and contemplation of the HIGHEST TRUTH; and that the happiness of the will consists in the love of that which is of the HIGHEST GOOD.

God alone, who eminently contains in His own being all things that are and can possibly be, can perfect our happiness by satisfying our boundless desire of wisdom and knowledge. And who can doubt but God will fill our souls with the knowledge of eternal life, since He hath promised by our Saviour, that the *pure of heart shall see God*. That is, know Him and contemplate Him in that Eternal Life which Christ hath revealed. And it may well be called "seeing" in Scripture, because knowledge to the mind is the same with seeing to the eyes; and the understanding to the soul is the same with the eye to the body.

The contemplative and greatest philosophers of antiquity discoursed of the celestial orbs with extraordinary pleasure and delight, when they beheld the order and graceful motion of those heavenly bodies. If there be such pleasure in searching after all THE MYSTERIOUS LEARNING contained in this great book of the creatures (which employs the study of innumerable souls night and day), you may easily conceive it must needs be a most sublime satisfaction to know Him clearly who is the Author of this structure, whose artifice now ravishes contemplative minds into such admiration.

Now, if man could know the art there is in the frame of the heavens, or if he could but reflect upon his own soul, as to know its nature, all its motions, the spring and the manner of them, nay, but know his own body, which, as the Psalmist says, is so *fearfully and wonderfully made*, that it astonishes our minds when we seriously think of it; by this you may judge what a happy life it will be to be acquainted with God, by whose wisdom the heavens were, and all the host of them by the breath of His Mouth, and who fashioned all our souls, and curiously wrought all the members of our bodies.

You will ask, perhaps, But what is it that we shall know of God? Do you tell us of a mysterious darkness? And who can fasten his heart on things of which he has no perception? or delight in the thoughts of that with which he has no acquaintance? I answer, we are already acquainted with something of Him, though "we see now through a glass in AN OBSCURE MANNER" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). As a glass represents not the thing itself, but its image; and he that sees a thing in a glass does not know it immediately from itself, but from its

image; such is the knowledge we have of God in this life. We know Him by the effects of His power, wisdom, and goodness; and by the revelation He has made of His mind and will in His Gospel.

And though the knowledge of God be but obscure, and not so clear as we desire; yet so much is plainly revealed, that one day we shall *see Him face to face*. We shall be transformed into His image, and by being assimilated to His divine nature, be made partakers of the joys and pleasures which are inseparable from it. And if the transfigured Humanity of Christ (as St. Anselm meditates in Matt. xvii.) in company of two saints gave such delight when it was seen but for a point of time; oh, how great will the pleasure be of seeing the Deity among the choirs of angels! If St. Peter, beholding the GLORIFIED HUMANITY, was affected with such a joy that he desired never to part with that sight; what shall we think of those who shall be counted worthy to see the Divinity?

If the nature of this life be farther examined, you will find the mind is not the only faculty that shall be gratified, but the will shall conceive a love as great as the knowledge of which I have discoursed. For as God is the highest object of the understanding, being the prime truth: so He is the chief object of the will, being first and best good.

Let us remember that God is love; and that by our love *He will be in us*, and by His love *we shall be in Him*. But if we descend lower than this, and only represent to ourselves how great a happiness to be beloved by the whole family of God in heaven. Look down from the highest angel to the smallest infant that shall be blessed there, from the noblest to the meanest in that

celestial court, and there is not one of them but will love us. They that are the greatest in that glory, will be the greatest lovers; they that enjoy most of God, will be disposed to let us enjoy most of them. For there is no pride in THE HEAVENLY CHOIR. Let us enter upon this heavenly life with all the speed we can make. Let us begin this very moment; and endeavor that no moment may pass hereafter, but in the love of God. For there is no heart so stony and insensible, that will not be dissolved into flesh, and receive any impressions from God, if it be once touched with the serious thoughts of this state of love. No soul so hard frozen and icy, that will not be thawed and melted, when it does but feel the least spark of this heavenly Fire.

Truly the *light is sweet*, says the wise man, *and it is delightful for the eyes to see the sun* (Eccles. xi. 7). The divine light excels all other, and the majesty and splendor of the Author of Nature is beyond the best of His works, the glory and the brightness of the sun. And if it now please us so much to think that we are really beloved of God, and of His Son Jesus, what an endless pleasure will the sense of their love yield us, when it has placed us in heaven. Our divine Lord has plainly told us that they who love Him will *rejoice* now, because He is gone to the Father (John xiv. 28), and therefore it must needs be AN ADDITIONAL PLEASURE in the other life to *see* (what we here believe) our dearest Lord shining in the glory of God the Father, and enthroned on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

For it is the highest kind of life in this world, which has an apprehension that it lives. This makes the life

of man above the life of beasts, and his pleasures above that they enjoy.

We have many considerations left us now, in the gospel of Christ, to refresh our minds from His great love in becoming a man for us, from His cross, from His resurrection, from His Ascension and sitting at God's right hand, from His promise of coming again, and the hope we have of reigning with Him forever. What if you should lose this life to attain that which is eternal? It will be no dear purchase, but bring you in an increase of more than a hundred-fold. Whatsoever you expend here for the Lord Jesus, He has given you His bond for it, that it shall be repaid with "good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over into our bosom" (Luke vi. 38). Look upon the little birds, and hearken how they chirp and sing in the wide and spacious air, where they have no limits set to their liberty, and then think what a cheerful life they lead, in comparison with one that is perpetually cooped in a cage. And look again upon your own souls, which we think are capable of the highest pleasures, and cannot you conceive a little, how delightful they will find it to be always singing in the vastest liberty and freedom? To be spreading their wings in the boundless light to which God will bring them; and to be uttering their joys, as they see themselves encompassed on all sides with innumerable objects of contentment? O how infinitely will it transcend all that they are capable of while they are imprisoned, or rather pinioned, in this body! though one moment of those joys which are sometimes felt here by holy souls, is not to be exchanged for all that the world can offer in its stead.

And these songs will be made more melodious by all the angels and saints who will make up but one happy choir, and shall sing the loudest and sweetest praises to our Creator and Redeemer. And what delight, we may conceive, will they take in the delicate strains of each other? when they all lift up their voices together, as those myriads of holy ones which St. John saw (Rev. v. 12) acknowledging the Lamb worthy to receive "power, divinity, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and benediction," which (as he says, verse 13) all good Christians even in this world delight to ascribe "unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever."

But it is not the soul only which will be happy in this eternal life. That word imports the supreme felicity of the whole man; and, therefore, man consisting of a body as well as a soul, that must come in for a share in this bliss, and at last be made partaker of it. Particular illustrations concerning the life of the body after the resurrection, would render my remarks too long, and now I prefer to deal in generalities; because I have been longer than I intended in describing the operations of our nobler part. A slight allusion to well-known examples must be sufficient.

First, the body must needs be transformed into a very noble being, which is to be the companion of such an exalted soul. We need much of its brightness and glory, which the Scripture seems to say shall be so great, that it will contend with the splendor of the sun itself; and we may very well believe it, seeing it is to be the vesture of a spirit so illuminated by the vision of God. For which reason, among others, it may be that the apostle calls it a *spiritual* body. And the apostle

indeed tells us (which is the *second* thing) that Christ, by His power which is able to subdue all things to Himself, will "make it like to His own glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21). Now what the brightness of that is, you may learn from the visions of the two great apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul (Matt. xvii.; Acts xi. 9).

The bodies we shall have after the resurrection will differ as vastly from those we have now, as earth does from heaven; and those heavenly bodies which we shall put on will differ very much among themselves in brightness and glory. As "the glory of the celestial bodies is one, and that of the terrestrial another," so the apostle tells us (among the celestial) "there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 40, 41, 42). That is, some will have bodies more bright than others, and shine as stars of a greater magnitude; to note them to be persons of eminent rank, who have done very glorious service to their Lord.

The martyrs, for instance, whose bodies were slain or burnt for Christ's sake, we may well suppose, will be more splendid than those who were laid in their graves in peace. And, therefore, to conclude this discourse, I shall only add these words of which we may be certain; that whether it be a greater or a lesser glory that we attain, we shall all shine together in one most blessed and glorious place.

ETERNITY OF THIS LIFE.

Life among the Jews, according to the letter of their law, signifying only all earthly good things, there was

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only a *long* life, not an *eternal*, in the land of Canaan, promised to them that kept that Law.

But the life promised by Christ, consisting only in the enjoyment of spiritual and heavenly blessings, it is not a *long*, but an *eternal*, never-ending life, in the possession of those good things which He has assured to us.

Now, the word *eternal* may be conceived to comprehend in it these *three* things. *First*. There is nothing but life in the state of blessedness, which shall not be interrupted by any doleful accident. The eternity of life must include in its notion a state of pure happiness, without anything that deserves the name of death to give it the least annoyance.

Let the readers pardon me, if I so far digress as to ask them, what is this wilderness wherein you live, that you should love it better than that heavenly *Canaan?* What is *forty* years, or perhaps *seventy*, of toil and labor, to that eternal rest which Christ has promised? Are not these husks contemptible in respect of the manna, *the Bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall live forever?* Is not our life here a dream, a shadow of life, in comparison with this life that is everlasting?

Second. Eternal life will be without any *intermission*, as well as without any *intermixture;* as there is no contrary sense of grief in that happy state, so there is no insensibleness of joy.

The blessed soul will never cease to feel its own pleasures, because, as there is no *night* in that heavenly country, so there is no *sleep*, in which we can scarcely be said to live. The life we shall lead there will be one continued act of knowing, loving, and rejoicing, praising, and obeying God.

As for all good works, there will be none of those wherein we are now employed, to exercise our obedience, nor shall we be in need of those things which now call for our charity to them or justice to ourselves. What shall works of mercy do in that world where there is no misery? How shall we visit the sick, where immortality and incorruption provide for a continual health? What hospitality shall we use there, where no poor inhabit nor strangers come? How shall we clothe the naked, where they are invested with a robe of the purest and most unspotted light? What enemies shall we study to reconcile, where universal friendship reigns? There will be no meat, no drink, no apparel or habitation to care for, where there is no hunger, thirst, and cold, or such like wants which now continually pinch us. How incomparably great will that happiness be when we shall have no other employment but to be happy.

Third. No serpent can creep into that Paradise to tempt and allure us from that great felicity, nor shall we be in any danger from our own flesh, nor find ourselves in a world where there will be anything to excite our desires, but what we may freely take the fullest satisfaction in. Our Saviour tells us that His faithful disciples, after He hath given them everlasting life, shall not die at all, no, not for the space of three days, though afterward they might rise again. But I have taken notice of one expression fuller than this; for He has not only said that *they shall not die* nor taste of death, but that "they *cannot* die any more" (Luke xx. 36). There is no possibility after they have attained that life that they should die again, for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being, by the

resurrection, begotten to an immortal life. Hence it is that the apostle calls this happy state by the name of *immortality* (2 Tim. i. 10) and *incorruption* (Rom. ii. 7), and says that our bodies shall be raised in *incorruption* and *put on immortality* (1 Cor. xv. 42–53), and *bear the image of the heavenly Adam* of our Lord in glory, who, we know, dies no more (verse 49).

Innumerable ages shall never put a period to this *eternal life;* but after they are all past, the whole man shall be as fresh and beautiful, without any sign of decay, as if it were but newly risen and had just then put on its purest robes of glorious light. Death being destroyed by Him who is the resurrection and the life, and who dies no more, an immortal soul shall inhabit an immortal body, and they shall be *forever with the Lord.*

This vast circle of eternity cannot be measured by our thoughts, which are too short and narrow to compass an eternal duration. When we have done all we can, the best way, I think, to our satisfaction, will be to have recourse to a passage from the mouth of God Himself, wherein we must rest ourselves contented. It is in Rev. xxi. 7, where St. John was told by Him who sat upon the throne (verse 5), that "He that shall overcome shall possess these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." The Lord of heaven and earth makes us a marvellously large grant in these words, so exceedingly full that we cannot desire it should run in more comprehensive terms. For by this promise He makes over to us *all things;* we have an everlasting perpetual estate made to us in *all things.* Let us admire the goodness of God, and see how liberal He is of His bounties, when we are capable to receive

them. Though He has said little to make us particularly understand the life of the next world, yet He has said very much to assure us that there is such a happy life. God Himself speaks concerning the promises of New Jerusalem: *These words are faithful and true* (Rev. xxi. 5). There is no deceit in these promises, no fraud in the drawing them up, nor any alteration in God's mind since they were made. Such is the unquestionable credit of the *words of eternal life*. God Himself had spoken them, and commanded us to believe them; yea, He has said, we must account Him a liar, if we do not rely upon them. For *this*, says St. John, *is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son.*

There being such a testimony, that is, that *Jesus is the Son of God*, we have no reason to doubt of the *eternal life* He promises; but upon the very same grounds that we believe the one we ought to believe the other. If the Father, the Word, the Holy Ghost, and all other witnesses have proved the former by undeniable testimonies, then, at the same time, they proved this also, that we shall *live by Him*. For it is evident that if Jesus was the *Son of God*, sent by Him in a special manner into the world to act in His stead, we are to believe all that He says of Himself, or that others, by His commission and authority, have declared Him to be. Now, if we look into His Gospel we shall find that He most earnestly affirms Himself *to have been before Abraham was* (John viii. 58), and to have had *a glory with God before the world was* (Ibid. xvii. 5), and to be *one with the Father, that the Father was in Him and He in the Father* (John x. 30, 38). And they who were His inspired witnesses, whom He said He would send as

the Father sent Him (Ibid. xxi. 21), and who were filled by Him with the Holy Ghost, declared Him to be God's Word, who "in the beginning was with God, and was God" (John i. 12), the image of the invisible God, the splendor of His glory, and the figure (that is, the express image) of His substance; who in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens were the works of His hands (Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3, 10). From all which we may certainly conclude that He is not only the Son of God in regard of His authority, but by nature; *begotten of Him before all worlds, of one substance with the Father.*

So that we may safely look upon the promises He makes us of *eternal life,* as the declarations of God's gracious will and pleasure, which shall undoubtedly be fulfilled. "No man indeed" (as St. John speaks, i. 18) "hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." For who could dive into God's mind, and tell us what was in His thoughts? What man could enter into His breast, and see what was in His heart to do for us? None but His only begotten Son, who being in His bosom and acquainted with His most secret counsels, hath *declared or expounded Him.*

All that I can apprehend remaining to be done, to give a fuller certainty of these promises, is to make particular inquiry what every one of those *witnesses* which testify to *Jesus,* say on this point, that *God hath given us eternal life,* and *that this life is in His Son.*

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHER.

God the Father spoke *three* times from heaven by an audible voice, to testify to our Lord Jesus Christ. And if you examine again all that He has said you will find the following words recorded: *He hath given us eternal life*, and that *this life is in His Son.*

It was by an audible voice from heaven that the angel of the Lord had called Abraham to tell him "the Lord had sworn by Himself, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18). And so now, to show us the seed was come who should be such a great benefactor to mankind, the Lord Himself speaks by a voice from heaven, declaring Jesus to be His Son, the author of that universal bliss He hath promised. Which tells us plainly enough that life is in Him; (which St. John affirms upon this *record*) otherwise He would not be such a Son as He now declared Him, able to *bless all nations;* who, it is manifest, had Him not for their visible leader, as the Israelites had Moses and Josue to give them a temporal inheritance; and therefore were to have His spiritual divine benediction in another world, where *He is the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him.*

Hear our Saviour's own interpretation of these words in that speech of His (John v. 26): "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself." Here He teaches us to argue, that, if He be the Son of God, as this voice said He was, then He is by the same voice declared to *have life in Himself;* because the Father hath it so, and Him, His only Son perfectly resembles. Now God the

Father sealed and authorized Him to be the person to whom we must repair for "the meat that endureth unto everlasting life" (John vi. 27). He declared Him to be the bread *of God*, as He calls Himself, which gives life to the world (verse 33), *the bread of life* (verse 35), *the living bread, which came down from heaven* (verse 51), and nourishes to eternal life; in short, that "whatsoever things the Father does, these the Son also does in like manner" (John v. 19). So that we need no more doubt of His ability than we do of God the Father to give eternal life to all His followers.

When God the Father declared Himself to be *well pleased* in this dear Son, whom all Christians acknowledge for their Lord and Master, He tells us by this voice, that He will be reconciled to us. For John the Baptist seeing Jesus, a little after he had baptized Him, coming toward him, he cried out, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); and again, the following day after this he pointed two of his disciples unto Jesus, and said in part the very same words, *behold the Lamb of God* (verse 36).

Now what is it to be the *Lamb of God*, but to be a sacrifice of God's own appointment, so pleasing and acceptable to Him, that it obtains all ends for which it was offered? and what is it to take away the sins of the world, but by overcoming all the temptations to which Adam yielded, and being obedient even to death, to restore us a right of entering Paradise again, from whence our sins have excluded us? to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, by removing the flaming sword; that is, taking those obstacles out of the way which debarred us from approaching the Tree of life?

Let us take a brief review of the second testimony

of the Father to His *well beloved Son*, and we shall find the same thing recorded again, that *He hath given us eternal life*, and that *this life is in His Son*.

The places are well known where these are recorded (in Matt. xvi.), and other evangelists who tell us that Jesus, being on a high mountain with three of His disciples, was transfigured before them, and a voice came from heaven, which said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him*. I shall only observe the words now added to the voice formerly delivered—they are these: *Hear ye Him*. Which are the very words Moses spoke to the children of Israel when he prophesied of the Messias and said: "*Him thou shalt hear*" (Deut. xviii. 15).

Now God, bidding the apostles *hear Him*, and Moses himself, whom they had hearkened all this while, being content that He should take His place, is an argument of something to be declared by Him that Moses had not spoken. And what should that be, but only the *words of eternal life*, which was but obscurely intimated and foreshadowed in the ancient Law, but by Him was preached so clearly and distinctly, that the voice of the heavens is not more audible?

There is nothing that our Saviour preached so frequently, nothing upon which He insisted so long and earnestly, and took such pains to settle in men's minds, as this belief, that *eternal life* shall be the portion of all that do well. And therefore when God the Father bade them hear Him, who made it His principal business to publish these glad tidings to the world, it was the very same as if this voice had said in express words, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; believe Him, He shall give you eternal life*.

This is the *commandment* His Father gave Him (John xii. 50). This is the *will of Him that sent Him* (vi. 40). This is the *promise which He hath promised to us, eternal life* (1 John ii. 25). And therefore He stands engaged to bestow it, and we agree with Him for it when we enter into His service.

To *hear Moses* was to embrace the covenant that God made them by him; so we can understand no less by *hearing the Son of God*, than our entering into the new covenant of which He is the mediator, which is founded upon *better promises* than the former, whereby we have a title to a celestial, not an earthly inheritance, whereof He is the Lord, and to which He has engaged Himself to be our conductor.

Our Lord Jesus Christ being thus described in these books that are certainly divine, is the great prophet, indeed, far greater than Moses, the author of a better covenant, and of more divine promises, such as this of ETERNAL LIFE, which is the most agreeable for Him to bestow, whose kingdom was not in this world (as Moses' was), but He reigns in the other world *Lord of all* for evermore.

We shall now pass to the *third* testimony which God the Father had given to His Son; and it is a very express record of this truth, that *we have eternal life*, and that *it is in His Son*. It is recorded in the twelfth chapter of St. John (verse 28), where upon our Saviour's request to God that He would glorify His own name, a voice from heaven gave this answer: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." God's name was glorified by glorifying His Son, as appears from John xi. 4. And so St. Cyril of Alexandria observed long ago: Whether the Scripture be, *glorify Thy Son*, or

glorify Thy name, it is all one in exact contemplation of things.

Now, if the truth of these words be thoroughly examined, how He *glorified Him*, and how He *would glorify Him again*, we shall meet in both a plain testimony that *Eternal Life* is in His Son to bestow upon us. Let us consider them briefly apart. God glorified Him by His Transfiguration: "They saw His glory" (Luke ix. 32). And by this glory which they saw the Father testified He should be made glorious in heaven, and able to make us so.

"He manifested forth His glory" (John ii. 11), and the multitude were excited by them to magnify Him with hosannas, and to cry out *glory in the highest* (Luke xix. 37, 38).

His *third* glorification was His raising Lazarus from the dead. By this Jesus said expressly that glory should redound to God the Father, and that He, the Son of God, should also be *glorified thereby* (John xi. 4). For this very end Lazarus fell sick that there might be a fit opportunity by the miraculous resurrection of so noted a person, and to make it known that He assumed not more glory to Himself than God the Father gave Him. This was a very great testimony from God, that indeed life was in Him, and that He did not vainly call Himself the *resurrection and life* (verse 25), because He now with His almighty word restored one to life who had been dead four days.

Hereby He declared that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John v. 26), and in verses 28, 29, "Wonder not at this (power of the Son of God), for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the

voice of the Son of God." They might well believe it, because He said it who proved Himself to be the *Truth* by such works as none could do but He that was *the Life*.

The Father not only said that He had glorified Him, but that He would glorify Him again, which was done also at *three* different times.

First. At *His death*, "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose" (Matt. xxvii. 52). For the very rocks rent, and the earth did quake, and the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the sun refused to give its light; and such an amazement came upon the centurion, who was then upon the guard, that *he glorified God* by confessing that *Jesus was a just man* (Luke xxiii. 47). The very opening of the graves served to adorn the triumph He was about to make over the powers of darkness; being a sign that He had now despoiled him *who hath the power of death*, who is the devil, and that He had *life in Himself*, and will give it to us, especially now that He hath finished His triumph, and is *glorified* at God's right hand, of which the rending of the veil also was no obscure token, showing that "we have confidence (liberty) to enter into the Holies by the blood of Christ" (Heb. x. 19).

Second. God the Father glorified Him at His *Resurrection*, which was attended with the resurrection of the dead bodies of those saints whose graves were opened at His death (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53), and then He was *lifted up from the earth* in another more noble sense than He had before upon the cross. Then the angels came in bright array to testify to Him what He had said of Himself, that God having *been glorified in Him*,

had glorified Him in Himself (John xiii. 31, 32). This was a very glorious testimony that indeed He hath *Life in Himself*, and shall be the author of eternal life to us. And therefore He is called the Prince (or author) of life (Acts iii. 15), because by *that which overcame death* (His resurrection) we know Him to be life, and the Son of the living God (St. Cyril).

Third. Christ's *exaltation* by God's own right hand to the throne of glory in the heavens, was another act whereby God glorified Him. This He prayed for with the greatest ardency and assured expectation, because God the Father "had given Him power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to all whom God had given Him" (John xvii. 1, 2).

God gave Him authority to lay claim to the highest power of bestowing immortality; which power when God the Father had actually put into His hands according to Christ's prayer and His own promise (of which He could not fail, having engaged Himself before a multitude to *glorify Him*), then "being consummated He became to all that obey Him, the cause (author) of eternal salvation" (Heb. v. 9). Then "He was *made a priest forever*" (Ibid. vii. 16, 17), not according to law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an indissoluble life," "Whereby He is able also to save forever them that come to God by Him: always living to make intercession for us" (verse 25). He can raise us up, and all that succeed us, as well as He did Lazarus, in whom He gave only a little taste of His power to give us life that shall never die.

God made good His promise, in the audience of both friends and strangers, even at His death; after which He raised Him out of His grave, and lifted Him up far

above all heavens, that He may be *glorified* once more (Thess. i. 10) by raising us up from the dead, and promoting us to eternal glory with Himself.

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE WORD, THE SECOND WITNESS IN HEAVEN.

From God the Father, this eternal Word came down and was incarnate, not only to reveal His will, but to die for our sins and to seal what He had preached with His blood. After which God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heaven; from whence He testified as loudly that He hath in Him eternal life for us, as He did that He is the Son of God. This witness, therefore, let us now examine.

St. Stephen being full of the Holy Ghost, and looking up steadfastly to heaven, "saw the heavens opened, and beheld the glory of God, and Jesus standing at His right hand" (Acts vii. 55, 56). There is not the least reason, then, to question but that this holy man beheld the *glory of God* and *Jesus the Lamb standing at His right hand*. We may clearly see in this vision both the things that St. John here asserts, viz., that eternal life is in Jesus the Son of God, to give to those that effectually believe in His name.

The power wherewith He is invested to give eternal life, is visible from His standing at God's right hand; which denotes His omnipotent virtue to effect what He pleases. For by *the right hand of God*, Jesus Himself was exalted to the hand of power, as you read (Acts ii. 33; v. 31), and therefore being placed there, it signifies that He can do for us what God had done for

Him, that is, exalt us to the like glory in heaven where He is. And so St. Stephen understood it; for as they were stoning him (the greatest punishment the Jews could inflict) he called upon our Saviour, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59). With these words in his mouth, he could have died, but that he pitied those who did not see as much as he did—which made him expire in prayer for his persecutors; wishing them no worse than that they might not be hindered by this sin from believing in Jesus, and going thither where he hoped presently to be received.

One of the principal actors in this bloody tragedy was presently after so miraculously touched from heaven, that it was visible our Lord had heard the devout prayer of His martyr in this particular; and therefore had not denied his request, but received his spirit also unto Himself.

St. Paul, who, travelling towards Damascus in a burning rage and fury, and with a sharp commission against Christians, was suddenly surprised by a great light from heaven; and beheld that Jesus, whom he no more thought to be glorious, than he did the thieves that were crucified with Him, presenting Himself and distinctly speaking to him in such a splendid manner, that "he fell down to the ground and could not see for the brightness of that light" (Acts xxii. 7–11). Now if the vision be considered, you will find that it contains this truth, that *Jesus is possessed of eternal life to give unto us*, as well as that He is the *Son of God*. For the light in which he beheld Him far exceeded the splendor of the sun at noonday (Acts xxvi. 13), which plainly declared Him to be the King of glory, clothed with the majesty of God, and possessed of a heavenly

kingdom; and therefore *able* to give eternal life to His servants. How should He come in such a robe of light? How should He appear thus, first to St. Stephen and now to St. Paul, if He had no power to do what He pleased? And, therefore, St. Paul is told by our Lord, at this very time when he saw Him in such majesty, that he should *be a witness of what he had seen.*

And the thing which St. Paul witnessed, was that "Jesus was over all things, God blessed forever" (Rom. ix. 5), and had sent him to preach the *resurrection* and *eternal life* (Acts xiii. 46, and xvii. 18). He heard Him also say that He would bestow this celestial inheritance upon us, even us Gentiles, and which he but once mentioned to his countrymen, they were ready to tear him to pieces (Acts xxii. 21, 22). And yet he reports this for a certain truth, from the mouth of Jesus Himself (as he relates this glorious vision to Agrippa, a prince well skilled in the Law), who bade him go unto the Gentiles "to open their eyes, that they may be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins" (Ibid. xxvi. 17, 18). And accordingly he went and preached everywhere, in obedience to this heavenly vision, the doctrine of the resurrection and eternal life, "witnessing both to small and great," as the prophets had foretold, "that Christ should suffer, and should be the first that should rise from the dead and show light to the people (of Israel) and to the Gentiles" (verses 22, 23). This light which we have by Christ's sufferings and rising from the dead, can be nothing else but the blessed hope of immortality. This St. John tells us is the *light* of mankind: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (i. 4). St. Paul endeavored to

fill the world with this light, that they might all know how much they were indebted to Jesus Christ, who brought life and immortality to light by His Gospel. And therefore for his zeal in the service of the Lord Jesus, he was favored by Him in this world above our mortal condition, and transported into the *Third Heaven*, and another time "into *Paradise;* where he saw visions and heard words, which it is not granted to man to utter" (2 Cor. xii. 3, 4). This was a further confirmation which the eternal Word gave of His power to give eternal life, and of His intention to take us up unto Himself.

Behold here the glory of the Christian religion, whose Author is so highly exalted, that He exalts this minister of His far above the greatest persons in former times. The translation of Elias out of this world is everywhere celebrated as a wonder. But how far he went, no revelation has explained. But the translation of St. Paul was far more illustrious and famous, the very place being noted to which he was carried almost half-way to the highest heavens of all. Let the Jews hereafter cease to pride themselves in the honor that was done to Moses; who alone went up to the top of Mount Sinai, and was in the midst of the clouds and darkness which appeared there. St. Paul, instead of a mountain, ascended into heaven, and instead of a cloud was carried beyond the air that is above the clouds, and very fitly, for it became a man of Christ to outstrip Moses as much as the Old Law was excelled by the Gospel that St. Paul preached, which he calls: "The mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but now is manifested to His saints, to whom God would make known the riches of the glory of this

mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ, in you the hope of glory" (Col. i. 26, 27).

Let us now pass to the third testimony which the Word gave of this truth to St. John, who, as he is the only person that expounds the eternal subsistence without any beginning of God the Word, and His generation of the Father before all worlds, so hath gathered here together more clearly than any of the rest all the evidences and grounds of the Christian faith, and also received the most full and pregnant demonstrations of what he has particularly recorded concerning *eternal life in the Son of God.*

Our blessed Lord (the Word made flesh) declared His power to do what He pleased by taking to Himself that very *name* and *title* whereby God the Father Almighty sometimes revealed Himself to the prophets. You read in Isaias (xli. 4 and xliv. 6), The Lord, the King of *Israel* and His Redeemer, saith, *I am the first and I am the last*, which is the very same with those words: *I am Alpha and Omega* (Rev. i. 8), *the beginning and the end, saith the Lord*, etc.—those two being the names of the *first* and the *last* letters in the *Greek* alphabet.

When the Almighty calls Himself the *first* and the *last*, He either declares that He is *eternal* who gave being to all things, and remains after they are all dead and gone, or else that He is *immutable*, from first to last constant to Himself and His promises.

It is true, indeed, says He (verse 17), *I am the first and the last*—that is, I am invested with all the power of God, bearing His name and authority. If our Lord had stopped here and said no more, this had been sufficient to convince Him of His power of raising His Church (for which He had suffered and laid the founda-

tion of it in His own blood) to eternal glory in the other world. But He proceeds for the stronger confirmation of His faith, and says, "Behold" more than this, "I am living forever and ever, and have the keys of death and of hell" (verse 18). Fear not; these words are all true, and therefore I conclude them with an *amen*.

But for a fuller evidence that *Life is in Jesus Christ, and that He intends to bestow it on us*, you may consider in the last place the testimony of the Word of God to St. John in the following letters to the seven churches in Asia. To one He saith: "I will give to him that overcometh to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of my God" (Rev. ii. 7). To another: "I will give him the crown of life, and he shall not be hurt by the second death" (verses 10, 11). To a third, "I will give him the hidden manna," etc. (verse 17). To another: "He shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels" (iii. 5). And to name no more, He promises to him that shall overcome, *to sit with Him in His throne* (verse 21), where He will crown the fidelity of all victorious souls with the greatest glory and honor.

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is the beginning of the creation of God" (Ibid. iii. 14).

By the name of Amen, which He gives Himself, He would have us understand that by Him all the promises made to the Church shall undoubtedly be fulfilled, according to that of St. Paul: "For all the promises of God are in Him. *It is*, therefore, also by Him, amen to God unto our glory" (2 Cor. i. 20). How can we

doubt Him, for He is a *witness*, who affirms and testifies nothing but the very truth, which can never fail, because He is the efficient cause of all things, by whom they were at first created, and by whom mankind is now repaired, and therefore is the Head of all creatures, especially of all Christians, who shall rise again from the dead to immortal life.

What may we not expect from so great a Prince, who has such an absolute command over all things? And why should we doubt of His sovereignty, who appeared in such an amazing splendor to St. John, and proclaimed such supereminent glory of His majesty? or why should we question His truth, who had approved Himself so many ways *the true and faithful witness*, especially by sending the Holy Ghost to bear witness to Him, according to His promise? We ought to rely upon His word, whose power appeared from His very first entrance into the world, to be so far transcending all creatures, that the apostles might see before His ascension to the glory wherein St. John beheld Him, that as He had the *words of eternal life* so He had that *Life in Himself*, which in due time He would bestow upon them.

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY GHOST, THE THIRD WITNESS IN HEAVEN.

The Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity, assures us that we have *eternal life in Jesus Christ*, as He did that *Jesus* is the *Son of God*.

At our Saviour's baptism the divine glory came down from heaven, and rested on Him in the sight of John

the Baptist, who thereby was persuaded that this was the Messias, the King of Israel. And by carefully inquiring into it, we shall find it as clear a witness that it is in His power to give *eternal life* to all His faithful subjects.

You read that He was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x. 38), the unction being a ceremony whereby kings were created. Now *His kingdom was not of this world*, as He professed, and yet He constantly asserted that He was a King, and exercised acts of royal authority. We must conclude that by this *unction* He was designed to be a King in heaven. There is no reason to doubt it, for the *glory of the Lord* which descended on Him was the *seal* or *crown* of God upon Him, which marked Him to be the Lord of glory, from whom we may expect the blessing of eternal life.

"The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him" (Isaias xi. 2). So it did upon our Saviour, in whom all the *fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily*, and therefore He must needs *have life in Himself*, and out of His fulness, as St. John speaks, we may expect to *receive grace for grace*.

Having all these divine gifts mentioned in Isaias (xi.), viz.: *wisdom*, *understanding*, *counsel*, *fortitude*, *knowledge*, and *godliness*, to qualify Him for this high office: *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord* (Luke iv. 18, 19), which were evident demonstrations that the *Spirit of the Lord rested on Him*, and made Him the greatest prophet that ever was, not only the Preacher, but the Giver of eternal life.

When the apostles on the day of Pentecost were baptized with the Holy Ghost, then the heavens poured down such a large shower of divine grace that it over-

flowed the world with a comfortable sense of eternal life. This descent of the Holy Ghost witnessed to our Saviour, and openly showed Him to the world as the *Prince of life* (Acts iii. 15).

Consider that the miraculous change which was wrought on a sudden in the minds of very ignorant men, is an evident argument what He can do for our souls in the other world. He inspired them with such understanding by the power of the Holy Ghost that the greatest doctors in Israel were not able to resist the wisdom whereby they spoke. They understood all the ancient prophecies; the Holy Ghost made them see the whole mystery which was wrapped up in them. And this knowledge being accompanied with a mighty power whereby the Holy Ghost enabled them not only to give eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, health to the sick, but life also to the dead, was an undoubted testimony that He from whom it came is able also to "change these vile bodies and make them like to His own most glorious body."

Our Lord declared He would send the Holy Ghost for this very purpose, that they might believe the rest of His holy promises: particularly this great one of eternal life, which is the meaning of that which you read in St. John (xiv. 12), and in verses 9, 10, 11. And as a further proof of this, we must observe once more that the Holy Ghost gave its testimony of the life that is in Jesus, and shall be given unto us, when it fell down upon other believers as it had done upon the apostles. It was a great wonder to hear the apostles speak with tongues; to see them cure the lame, and restore sight to the blind; nay, to raise the dead to life. But it was a greater wonder to see other illiterate

Christians receive the same gifts by the laying on of their hands, and invocation of the name of the Lord Jesus, who presently filled them with the Holy Ghost.

What! shall an ignorant seaman be made a prophet, and speak with all tongues? A poor tent-maker unlock mysteries, and compose spiritual songs and hymns? A man that yesterday could mend nothing but his nets, now cure a man of a bloody flux? A rude soldier command devils, and storm his strongholds more easily than a town without walls? Lord, what light is this, might they justly say, which shines in our dungeon? What power is this wherewith we see frail flesh armed? This surely signifies that men are very dear to God, or else He would not dwell among them.

And after the Jews, who quarrelled at St. Peter's preaching to the Gentiles, were satisfied that the Holy Ghost was fallen upon them, even as upon themselves, they had no more to say but this: "God then hath also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18). This they looked upon as the beginning of God's favor and loving-kindness to them, which would conclude in nothing less than eternal life, of which we are discoursing.

And St. John, after he had put the disciples in mind of the unction they had received, and exhorted them to continue in that *doctrine* which it taught, immediately adds that, "this is the promise which He hath promised us, life everlasting" (1 John ii. 20, 24, 25).

Before I pass to the other *three witnesses on earth*, let all those who have taken the pains to read thus far this treatise be so kind to themselves as to recollect what they have read, and in their quiet thoughts to put themselves often in mind that the Father hath said this

to be true by a voice from heaven at several times: when Jesus was baptized; when He was upon the Holy Mount, and before a multitude of people, He testified that eternal life is in Him. The Word also has shown us this glorious state when He appeared to St. Stephen, to St. Paul, and to His beloved St. John, who have communicated their knowledge to us, and told us that He assured them He lives, and that we shall live by Him. The Holy Ghost, likewise, hath declared this, by coming down upon Him, and upon His apostles, and upon His faithful ones. And then their faith would be immovable, did they ponder these things; they would never call it into dispute, after such demonstrations, whether there be another life or no. Yea, they themselves would become *immovable*, and *steadfast*, and *abundant* in *the work of our Lord;* because the very same witnesses tell them that this is the only way to eternal happiness, which cannot be compassed by any means but by patient continuance in well-doing.

Jesus Christ is certainly in heaven; He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high; He wishes we would be espoused to Him; He will settle an eternal inheritance upon us. And He only requires us to retire seriously into ourselves, and there often meet with Him; to hear and obey those He has placed to rule us; to live soberly, righteously, and godly, while we are in the world; to let no company draw us from His precepts, nor suffer any creature to rob Him of our affection. Let us, with honest hearts, beg the assistance of the Holy Ghost for the attaining of such a glorious life with our Saviour.

CONCERNING THE WITNESSES ON EARTH; AND FIRST, OF THE WATER.

You have seen already how many there are that solicit our affections and persuade us to believe in the Lord Jesus, and heartily consent to Him in whatsoever He requires. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have commended Him to us as the Prince of peace, and the Lord of glory. For as if these witnesses were not sufficient there are *three* more (water, blood, and spirit), whose witness none could ever deny, that speak the very same thing, and affirm it as strongly as the other, *that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

By *water* we are to understand that purity of Christ's doctrine and life; or else His baptism, by which He appeared to be the Son of God. Let us now consider what they say to the point in hand.

The doctrine of Christ naturally lifts up the mind toward heaven, and disposes those that embrace it to look for *eternal life*, for which it is but a preparation. For it teaches us to abstract our hearts from this flesh wherewith we are clothed, and from this world wherein we live, as unworthy of that care which we are apt to bestow upon them; in short, the very intent and purpose of it is to render us something like God Himself. What can any man make of this, but that it is a preparation for another life? Take a review of that compendium which I have drawn of this doctrine, and you will be satisfied that it is nothing else but a contrivance to make us heavenly, whereby we shall live as men of another world and not of this.

His heavenly doctrine teaches us, if His service requires it, to deny ourselves even in the most innocent and lawful enjoyments of this life; to forsake father and mother, and houses and lands for His name's sake; yea, to lay down our very lives rather than forsake His doctrine and violate His commands. These are express lessons which His sermons teach His disciples; but are things so sublime, so much above the reach of flesh and blood, that it would be the greatest absurdity that can be imagined to propose them to men's observance without the hope of something in another life to reward such hard services.

He would have had no followers on these terms, had He not made it evident as the rest of His doctrine that He would be the *Author of eternal salvation* to them that would obey Him. Men were not so fond of torments and death as to expose themselves to the danger of them if they had not seen the greatest reason to believe that their Master would recompense their present sufferings with a future happiness. If He had not held this truth in His hands as clear as the sun, that they who would follow Him should be immortally happy, He might have stretched them out long enough before He had drawn so much as one follower after Him. The trees would as soon have followed Him as men, who would never have stirred a foot in such a narrow path unless He had shown them plainly that it led to everlasting life.

His doctrine of eternal life is constantly intermixed with all His sermons. It is the very strain of His preaching, that if any man would follow Him, and do as He did, he should find rest for his soul; and that God the Father would honor those who did Him ser-

vice (John xii. 26). This He proclaims in the clearest manner: "I am the light of the world" (John viii. 12); (*Illuminator et deductor humani generis*, as Tertullian excellently expresses it), the enlightener and the conductor or guide of mankind: "He that follows me shall have the light of life"; and let it be noted how He proclaims this to every man, "that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (Ibid. iii. 15, 16). And He asserts it with the strongest and most vehement asseverations. "Amen, amen I say unto you, he that believeth in me, hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47). God *had sealed Him* (Ibid. vi. 27), whereby all might see that He was the author of everlasting life. And He repeats this doctrine a great many times in that chapter (verses 33, 35, 39, 40, 47, 48, 51, 52, 54, 57). Insomuch that St. Peter concludes at the latter end of that sermon there was no master comparable to Him, who had *the words of eternal life*. "I am from above, I am not of this world" (John viii. 23). "I speak that which I have seen with my Father" (verse 38) and (verse 42): "I came not of myself, but He sent me."

For which reason He does not discourse of immortal life as a philosopher, going about to prove it, by reasons and arguments, but only asserts it as one that had divine authority. His own holy life in strict obedience to God, was free from all blame, and it had a strong force in it to persuade us, that He indeed sought eternal glory, and was fully assured He should be possessed of it, for Himself and all His. Ask His *poverty*

and *humility*, and they will tell you that He sought for the glory of God only. Inquire of His *charity* and *bounty*, and they will bear testimony that *all fulness* is in Him. Examine His *labors* and pains, His travels and journeys, trace His steps over sea and land; and they all will confess that He sought a heavenly country. Ask Him what He meant by His *patience*, His willing endurance of all reproaches, calumnies, hatreds, persecutions, and they will, likewise, conclude in the same testimony, that He had a *joy set before Him*, which made Him despise them all. In short, consult His fasting forty days; His enduring so many temptations of the devil, fighting his offers, rejecting his counsels; and you have no account of them but this, that He had indeed *the meat that endures to everlasting life;* that He verily believed the voice from heaven, which said He was the *Son of God;* and that He knew He had a greater glory than all the kingdoms of which the devil offered Him.

All that nation who persecuted our Saviour held John the Baptist for a prophet, and went to be baptized by him. The wisest of them dare not affirm that his commission was *from men*, but rather that he undertook this office by authority *from heaven*, upon which account they were bound to receive his testimony concerning our Saviour as unquestionable; which they themselves clearly discerned to be a good consequence; and, therefore, would not reason this matter out with our Saviour, but let it fall to the ground, when they themselves had begun the dispute.

Now he testified as plainly that by Him we shall have eternal life, as he had that He is the *Son of God* (see Matt. iii. 2–12); and still more expressly He says: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting"

(John iii. 36), and "he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life."

The Jews expected an universal Baptism and cleansing of the people. Now the very end and intention of Christ's baptism was, it is very well known, for the *remission of sins*, and consequently for *eternal life*. This He taught men to believe, and then authorized His disciples to receive men to these high and noble privileges, by baptizing them in His name. Men were marvellously enlightened, renewed, and transformed by this Baptism, and holy men doubted not to call it the *water of salvation*, the *water of life*, and the *immortal nativity* (St. Cyprian, Epist. ad Donatum). Nay, St. Augustine informs us, that the Punic Christians called baptism by no other name than *salvation*.

And for this they had the authority of our Saviour, who said after He was risen from the dead, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16), and showed St. John "a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the midst of the street of the new Jerusalem" (Rev. xxii. 1, 2). And He calls His baptism the *water of life*, because it runs thither, and there we begin to live, and are admitted to the friendship of God, and put in assured hope that the life which then begins shall be continued to eternal life.

All the ancient Fathers held that baptism was a public profession of the hope of immortality; and a seal also of the promise of God to the whole Church, both the living and the dead, who as often as baptism was repeated, had an open assurance given them from God, that they were now born to spiritual life and that they should also rise again to everlasting life.

I shall dismiss this first witness on earth, which is to be regarded by us as very considerable; and cannot be denied by those who cavil at some of the other. For all men acknowledge the life and doctrine of our Saviour to be incomparably excellent; and John the Baptist stands upon record in Josephus for a person of severe and strict sanctity, and the whole Christian Church believed thus from the beginning; as appears by their holy profession which they made when they entered into the gates of the Church by Baptism.

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE BLOOD, THE SECOND WITNESS ON EARTH.

The next *witness* is the Testimony of the Blood, by which we are to understand the *crucifixion* and *death* of the Lord Jesus.

The stubborn Jews who will be loth to grant that a voice from heaven declared Him the Son of God, cannot deny that their forefathers imbrued their hands in His *Blood*. It is apparent that to lay down His life was an act perfectly voluntary in our Saviour. He might have chosen whether He would have died or not, for *no man* (as He said, John x. 18) *could take His life away;* openly professing, *I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.* Now, *He that saved others* (Matt. xxvii. 42) could surely have saved Himself, if His will had otherwise resolved. He that raised Lazarus from the dead could have more easily stricken all His opposers dead at His feet, if it had been His pleasure.

What could move Him so tamely, like a lamb, to

give His throat to the bloody knife, and to hang so meekly upon an infamous cross, if it were not the contemplation of an eternal life which He knew He should obtain by His obedience to God, and bearing witness to the truth?

The circumstance of His death is a plain declaration that He was no impostor. For it stands upon good record that He Himself knew of His death beforehand, and foretold it, with the manner of it, and yet was so far from endeavoring to avoid it, that He went of His own accord to the place where He knew they would come to apprehend Him. In His way to His Passion He *fell into an agony*, which declared how much nature was against His proceeding. Such terrible apprehensions as then presented themselves, would have made Him take the opportunity of the night, and consult for His safety if He had been a deceiver, and not very well assured that this was the way to everlasting life. Now it is as manifest as the sun, that, if He knew Himself to be an impostor, He could have no hope that God would raise Him up again; and it is as manifest on the other hand that, if He did not rise again, there was no hope that His apostles would preach Him, because He had proved Himself a liar; and His name would have been buried in silence, or else remembered with reproach; Himself having blasted it, by failing in the performance of His word.

I shall consider only one thing more that comforted our Saviour and supported His spirit upon the cross. Was it the hopes He had to be magnified everywhere by His disciples when He was dead and gone, for a man of an invincible spirit? No; He comforted Himself with the thoughts of His own integrity; He humbly

addressed Himself in prayer to God, to whom He commends His spirit, and breathed out His soul in a knowledge that He would receive it, and glorify Him in heaven. He lifted up His eyes thither, as St. John testifies, and said: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. . . . . I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do; and now glorify Thou me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was" (John xvii. 1, 45). And when the moment of His departure was come, and He was just expiring on the cross, *He cried with a loud voice*, that all might hear Him, *Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, and having thus said, He gave up the ghost.*

He saw how loth His disciples were to part with Him, and with what sad countenances and troubled spirits they received the news. He was encompassed with sighs and groans when He did but mention it; for *sorrow* (as He speaks) *filled their hearts* (John xvi. 6); would not this have moved a heart less tender than His? How could He endure to see their tears flow so fast, if He had not been sure that He was *going*, as He told them, *to His Father, to prepare a place for them*, which ought to have made them rejoice rather than weep, because He would come again, and receive them to Himself, that where He was, there they might be also (John xiv. 1, 2, 3, 28)?

He earnestly desired them to look upon His Blood as the seal of a new covenant between God and men. So He said, just before His death: "This is my blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28).

You read in Tim. ii. 6, "He gave Himself a redemp-

tion for all." That is, He became the price of our redemption, and like the Paschal Lamb, His blood saves us from the destroyer, and assures us that God will bring us to eternal rest.

Well might St. Paul call Him our Pasch, that is, *sacrificed for us.* For it is visible that He was slain for the salvation of mankind as the Paschal Lamb was slain for the preservation of Israel; and that as the destroying angel passed over those houses where he found the blood of that Lamb upon the door-posts, and spared the lives of the inhabitants; so all those souls that are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, shall be delivered by Him from perishing, and preserved to eternal life.

Now our Saviour made good His promise which He had made, that He would give them His *flesh to eat.* He gave them also His very *blood* to *drink;* which was the price of their redemption, that which saved them from the destroyer, and overcame those enemies which opposed their entrance into the eternal rest. "For His flesh is meat indeed; and His blood is drink indeed" (John vi. 56). That is the most perfect food which has power to give (not a temporary, as the Paschal Lamb did, but) an eternal life.

CONCERNING THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT, THE THIRD WITNESS ON EARTH.

The testimony of the Spirit is the last and greatest argument which St. John here produces (verse 6), for the Spirit is the truth; an infallible witness, which cannot deceive you, that *Jesus is the Son of God.* And so it is likewise, that eternal life is in Him; and that we

shall enjoy it by His means; for this testimony of God is given to make us sure of the one, as we are of the other.

Let us weigh those words of St. John in his Gospel (xx. 30, 31), where he tells us that he wrote the "signs which Jesus did (after His resurrection) in the presence of His disciples, that they might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing they might have life in His name." They were wrought by *Him*, and recorded by His *disciples*, that the world might be convinced He was the great Lord of all; and that they might, by faithful subjection to Him, look for *eternal life* from His omnipotent love. For by these *He manifested His glory* (John ii. 11), and declared to the world He could work as great a change upon our mortal bodies as He did then upon the water, making them as much nobler than they are now, as the *water* excelled itself when it was become *wine*. They were mighty instances of His power, and of His goodness, too. And they were a plain demonstration of His power to give *eternal life* to all His followers. (Read John vi. 38, 39, 40; iii. 16; ix. 33; x. 37, 38; xiv. 10; xv. 24.) Our Saviour tells the obstinate Jews it was not such a marvellous thing that a dead man should be raised up by Him, if they considered, which was far more wonderful, that He was the Person who would one day call mankind out of their graves, and give unto the good the *resurrection of life* (John v. 28, 29). For proof of which He reminds them of His *miraculous works* (verse 36), which testified God had sent Him, and would verify all that He said. And thereupon He exhorts them to *search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that*

gave testimony of me (verse 39). *And you will not come to me that you may have life* (verse 40). Which was as much as to say, you all look for *eternal life*, and you hope in the Holy Scriptures to find it. I wish you would be more diligent in perusing them, for they show plainly that I am He who must bring you to it. But this is the misery of your condition, that neither my *works*, nor the *Scriptures*, nor the *testimony* of John the Baptist (which he first alleged, verse 32, etc.), will persuade you to believe in me; without which I cannot bestow life upon you.

He did such miracles as none before Him had done: He opened the eyes of the blind, cleansed the lepers, and made the lame to walk. And a great many of His miracles were the restoring of men to their primitive state of integrity and soundness of body, by removing sicknesses and diseases which sin had brought upon them. It was a notable sign that He was the Healer of nature, the Restorer of the world, the Saviour of mankind, who could bring them back to the blessed immortality which they had lost. Whence it was that when He cured the man sick of the palsy, instead of saying, Be well, He said: *Son, thy sins are forgiven thee;* to show that He had power to remove the punishment of sin, and so make them immortal.

And when He had fed so many thousands with *five barley loaves* and *two fishes*, this miracle made the multitude conclude that certainly He was the *Prophet* who should come into the world; and therefore they purposed, whether He would or no, to come and make Him *their King* (John vi. 5, 6, 14, 15). Our Lord takes occasion to tell them how sorry He was to see them so industriously pursue the food of their bodies and not

mind the food of their souls, to which His late miracle led them; and in plain terms told them that this spiritual food was Himself, who was the *bread of life*, and that they should hunger after more than for the loaves wherewith they had been filled; so that if they did eat of Him, they should have *everlasting life*, and *He would raise them up at the last day* (verses 26, 27, 35, etc.).

This they might have easily believed if they had considered the miracle of the loaves, which was a token from God that He could support them eternally. For why should not He be able to give life who so strangely preserved it? and out of a little dust make a body, as He had out of a few crumbs made so many loaves?

And if we consider how He dispossessed devils, it told the world plainly that He came *to destroy the works* of the devil, who by sin held his throne, and gave him all the power he had over men, and made them his vassals and slaves.

Jesus came to take away the sins of the world, and thereby disarm him of the power of death, and restore men again to that everlasting life out of which the devil had before thrown mankind, as our Saviour now threw him out of them. All this, the Jews themselves confess, shall be the work of the Messias.

That He raised dead men to life was the greatest miracle of all. This showed that He had life in Himself, and would bestow it upon us, for He raised them on purpose to declare what He was, and what they might expect from Him, viz., a perfect victory over death and the grave, which appeared most remarkably in the resurrection of Lazarus, who was not only dead, but already putrid, and in dissolution.

The Ὄχλος, *the multitude*, gave testimony of it (John

xii. 17). The people were confirmed in this belief by the testimony of all their senses. By their *own voice* which showed Him the tomb, saying, *Come and see*, and *His* loud voice which they *heard* saying, *Lazarus, come forth* (John xi. 34, 43). By their *sight* when they beheld him, whom they knew very well to be dead, obeying His word. By their *smell* when they perceived the ill scent as they rolled away the stone. By their *touch* when they loosed his hands and his feet, as our Saviour bade them, and let him go. The Pharisees began now to despair of prevailing against Him any other way than by taking His life; they resolved in their hearts to have Lazarus killed too, because as long as he lived he would proclaim this miracle to the honor of Jesus, who, just when He was going to raise up Lazarus, inculcates this doctrine (that He was the Author of eternal life), as the fittest season to impress it upon them: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live. And every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die forever" (John vi. 25, 26).

Christ was *raised* and *glorified that our faith and hope might be in God* (1 Pet. i. 21).

That our blessed Saviour was really dead, as history testifies, His greatest enemies always confessed, and still acknowledge. And if we will not doubt of everything we do not see, we cannot refuse to believe that Jesus did indeed rise again after He was dead and buried, and ascended into heaven. Which being supposed, there is no man can have the face to deny the *resurrection of the body* and *life everlasting*, which Christ our Lord hath promised us. There can be no truer reasoning than that of St. Paul: "If we believe that

Jesus died and rose again, even so them who have slept through Jesus, will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 13). So the same apostle argues elsewhere against those who denied this truth: "If Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" (1 Cor. xv. 12). It is the grossest absurdity to say there can be no such thing as the restoring of a dead body to life, when it is so evidently verified in Christ's resurrection, which shows it is so far from being impossible or incredible that it is to be a thing which has been done already, as is very well attested by witnesses that cannot with any equity be rejected. There is no reason to doubt it, but the greatest reason to hope and be confident "that He who raised up Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus," etc. (2 Cor. iv. 14). For by His resurrection the Spirit proved the truth of all that the other witnesses testified. Particularly it demonstrated the truth of His doctrine, by which *life* and *immortality was brought to light*. If this had not been true, that we shall live forever with Him, Jesus would have perished, and never come to life again to deceive the world the second time. But seeing God did not leave His soul in hell, nor suffer His *Holy One* to see corruption, it is an infallible argument that those who believe in Him shall not perish, but be made alive as He is. Because, He that said He would rise again the *third* day, said likewise, with the same assurance, that at the *last* day He will raise up us also, and bestow upon us everlasting life.

This is the character He had given of Himself: "*I am the resurrection and the life*." This He often preached and proved in many ways; but after all, He sealed it with

blood, and told them they should see it sealed by His resurrection from the dead; which ensuing at the time appointed, was a perfect demonstration that He said truly when He affirmed that He is *the resurrection and the life*.

Let us remember how "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose, and coming out of the tombs, after His resurrection, came into the holy city and appeared to many" (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53). Which were notable instances of His power to give life; and put us in hope that we shall all rise again as they did. Never was any such thing heard of before or since; and, therefore, it was intended to demonstrate the mighty power of His resurrection, when these saintly bodies arose from their graves. If the apostles had written falsely concerning the rising of these *holy persons*, and coming into Jerusalem, as well as of the rising of Lazarus, there would have been pens enough in those days employed to confute them, and proclaim the forgery. And those Jews would have been as careful preservers of such confutations as of any of their most beloved traditions.

Nor is there the least shadow of reason to question the testimony of those who saw Him *ascend into heaven*, and as a token of His being there, received from Him, ten days after, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which completed the demonstration of His power and purpose to give *eternal life* to all His followers.

For His ascension into heaven evidently shows us that it is possible that we may be translated thither; and though our bodies now be but lumps of living clay, yet they may be one day snatched from this dull globe to shine among the stars. And this is not only possi-

ble, but certain, for nothing can be out of the reach of His power, which is over all creatures "in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (1 Phil. ii. 10), and a power to do all things (1 Pet. iii. 22); "for God hath put all things under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 27). He designed He should bring many *sons unto glory* together with Himself. Because this Royal power whereby He is invested is a kind of trust; not only for Himself, but for the good of all those whom He rules and governs (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, etc.). For the apostle concludes that Christ having a kingdom which must at last be resigned into the hands of God the Father, will first put down all rule, all authority and power, and leave no enemy unconquered; no, not death, which will only be the last that shall be subdued, and destroyed it must be (verses 26, 27). Nay, our Lord Himself acknowledges His kingdom to be a trust, when He says: "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him" (John xvii. 2), whence it is that He often protests, "This is the will of the Father," etc. (John vi. 39, 40–57), and in express terms He saith that He went away to *prepare a place for us*. And, therefore, He is bound by His office to promote us to that glory and honor in heaven which it is the will of the Father that it should be bestowed on us. This He most earnestly prayed for when He was on earth; it being one of His last requests to His Father: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given me may be with me, that they may see my glory which Thou hast given me" (John xvii. 24). I shall close the last testimony of the Spirit with these remarkable words of St. Peter: "All things of His divine power which appertain to life and godliness, are

given us through the knowledge of Him who hath called us by His own proper glory and virtue," etc. (2d Epis. i. 3, 4). The meaning is plainly this, that God in a most excellent manner bestowed on us all things that are necessary for our future happiness, and for our present conduct in piety, which is the only way to eternal life. And if you ask me how He hath given us these things in so resplendent, godlike a manner, I will tell you: It is through the knowledge of Him who called us; that is, through Jesus Christ, the true *Word* of God, who hath called us to piety and happiness. We are sure to attain everlasting life, if we follow those directions He hath given us, which will infallibly bring us to it. We are so sure to attain eternal life, and our promises of it are so strongly confirmed that we cannot doubt of them. For when He gave them, it *was* *διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρέτης*, by glory and virtue.

None, I suppose, question but by these great and precious promises by which we may be made partakers of the divine nature, He means those of raising us from the dead, and carrying us to heaven, to live with God, and that eternally. Now, as there is nothing that can be compared with these promises, so we have no testimony on earth comparable to this of the Spirit. For by this we know that He hath all power in heaven and earth, and is able to do whatsoever the Father Almighty does; that is, give life to the dead, which is the property of the Almighty alone. So the enemies of our religion are forced to confess, who say there are *three* keys which God keeps to Himself, and commits to none of His ambassadors: *the keys of the womb, the keys of heaven, and the keys of the grave.*

Our Lord Jesus Christ was no ordinary ambassador,

for He had power to raise those to life who are dead; He has *the keys of death and hell* (Rev. i. 18). He can raise even the dead bodies of His subjects to life again. And He hath *lifted them out of the dust* (to apply the Psalmist's words), even with the princes of His heavenly court to praise and bless His love forever and ever. Nor did He assume this power to Himself vainly, for it was conferred on Him by God the Father, who raised Him from the dead, and gave Him the glory wherein St. John beheld Him when He said: "I am alive and was dead, and behold I am living forever and ever, and have the keys of death and of hell."

It becomes us to stand amazed at the transcendent love of God towards us sinners; who sent His own eternal Son appearing from heaven in our flesh, with this message: *That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.* O most joyful news! shall we poor mortals live forever? and live there where *Jesus* is? He tells us we shall live with Him, and see His glory, and be with His Son Jesus, and reign together with Him in His heavenly kingdom, and be equal to the angels, and enter into the joy of our Lord, and continue with Him forever.

But that we may understand how much we are indebted for His wonderful love, I shall show as briefly as I can how little the world knew, before our Saviour came with this blessed happiness.

Among all those philosophers who endeavored by human argumentations to find it, there were but few, as St. Augustine truly observes (Lib. xiii., de Trinitate) that could, and they but scarcely, arrive at the knowledge of the immortality of the soul. See his book of the "City of God" (Lib. xii., cap. 20). There is noth-

ing truer than that of St. Paul (Ephes. ii. 12), "that they had no hope of the promise and (were) without God in the world." For to say nothing of the Resurrection (to which they were perfect strangers), some of the greatest philosophers denied the immortality of the soul. Socrates himself, the very best of them, was not confident of it, but left it in doubt, as a thing uncertain. Nor was Aristotle assured, no, nor Tully and Seneca, who could not by all their reasonings attain a well-grounded *hope* of it, but were forced to confess, after all their disquisitions about the soul, that *it is one of the most difficult things in the world to receive any certain knowledge about it* (Aristotle's Lib. de Anima, c. 1). All that they said was uncertain and sometimes extravagant. And how deeply we are indebted to the exceeding great love of God, who, when He saw the minds of men so weak to comprehend such things, and that they stood in need of a divine Teacher, was pleased in His infinite condescension to send His own beloved Son, who is *the way, the truth, and the life.*

It cannot be denied that the greatest part of the Jews before our Saviour's coming did expect the resurrection of the dead and eternal life (John v. 39; Acts xxiii. 6, 7, 8; Heb. xi. 9, 10, 16, 26), and their writers in all ages have spoken much of the *world to come.* All this is true; but it is as certain that they had no such express promises of these things either in the law or in the prophets as we have in the holy Gospel. Where do you read one such saying as this in the whole law of Moses: "Amen, Amen, I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that

I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John vi. 47, 51, 52).

Promises of the goods of this world were made to those that diligently kept God's commandments, to whom He says: He will give to your land the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn, and your wine, and your oil, etc. (Deut. xi. 14, 15), which is repeated again more largely in xxviii. 2, 3: "And all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee," etc. But in what place do you find any such promises as these: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God; blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have a right to the tree of life" (Matt. v. 3, 5, 8, and Rev. xxii. 14).

All is dark in the law of Moses to prove the resurrection and the life to come; and we can conclude nothing certainly, but that God did not reveal these things through the writings of Moses, who was sent to make a covenant of another nature with the *Israelites*. Whence it was that the *resurrection* of the dead and *eternal life* were so much disputed by a great party among the Jews; the Pharisees affirming, and the Sadducees denying, which left the minds of the multitude in much doubt, while they saw these two schools so resolutely opposing each other. And if we pass from the law to the prophets, especially to the prophet Isaias, who speaks more clearly of the resurrection of the dead than all the rest, we shall not yet receive full satisfaction. The texts of Isaias are these: xviii. 4; xxiv. 18, 21, 22, 23; xxv. 8; xxvi. 19; lxvi. 8, 14, 24, and

such like, which, when seriously examined, show that this doctrine was but obscurely delivered in the Scriptures, although men knew surely by tradition of the immortality of the soul.

But in express terms we read: "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (John iii. 16). "And this is the promise which He hath promised us, life everlasting" (1st Epist. ii. 25). What is there in all the prophets like to this? "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live" (John xi. 25).

This He published so clearly that the dullest and most illiterate souls saw there was no Master comparable to Him, who had the words of eternal life, and by His death, resurrection, and ascension, opened to all believers the kingdom of heaven. From all which we may safely conclude that there can no reason in the world be given why any man thus informed should not believe the Gospel, but only his own desperate wickedness. For the things propounded therein are most desirable above all other. It reveals such a wonderful love of God to mankind, that all men would rejoice to hear the news of it, were they not averse to those pious and virtuous discourses whereby they are told they must attain it. Nothing attracts all hearts so much as the hope of a blessed immortality; which is so testified to us in the Gospel, that nothing could make men turn their ears away from it by infidelity, but only the incurable wickedness of their nature, which the Gospel says they must quit for so great a good.

In a word, there is nothing in this Book but what is suitable to all men's desires, save only the holy rule of

life; and therefore there can be nothing else but their hatred to this, which makes them reject all the rest. They would follow their nobler appetite after those good things which the Gospel promises, if they had not perfectly given up themselves to those baser appetites which must be denied for their sake. "And if our gospel be hid," says St. Paul, "it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of unbelievers, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 34). That which the Gospel reports is as clear as the noonday. Nothing can be more visible than the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, which, says the apostle, if any man do not see, after such evident demonstrations of these things, it is his wickedness hinders him. And such men after they have long resisted the light, fall under the power of the devil so inevitably, that he blinds their eyes. They become infidels of themselves; and having given themselves over to unbelief against such miraculous evidence of the truth of the Christian faith, God gives them over to him to whose service they have so slavishly devoted themselves in such a manner that they cannot but with great difficulty be recovered.

From which miserable condition let all those who are inclined to infidelity take care to save themselves by timely considering those divine demonstrations which these holy men of God have reported to us; who beheld our Saviour's glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). Concerning which words, hear what the great St. Chrysostom writes: "The angels appeared in great glory upon the earth to Daniel, David, and Moses; but

they appeared as servants, as those that had a master. It is the peculiar glory of our Saviour that He appeared as a Lord, as having power over all; and though in a poor and vile fashion, yet even in that the creation knew its Lord and Master," etc. (Hom. xii. in Johan.)

The grounds of Christian belief, you see, are based upon the most credible witnesses, that it is rank folly and baseness to deny it. For what we know by credible report is as certain as what we see and hear with eyes and ears. And what can be better attested than the Holy Ghost, which is justly called the *testimony of God*, and the *testimony of Christ* (1 Cor. ii. 1 and i. 6)? because God testified these things to us as His will by His Son Christ; and Christ testified them to us by the Holy Ghost. For so St. Paul says (verses 5, 6) the *Corinthians were made rich* by our Lord *with every gift, as the testimony of Christ was confirmed among them.* After which mighty evidence we are assured God intends to bestow on us immortal life, and nothing of any weight whatsoever can be objected against this doctrine, particularly against that part which concerns the resurrection of the body at the last day. For that great Lord who said it, we are certain can perform it. He hath also already fulfilled His word in other things He foretold, though nobody would believe Him till they saw it, which is a good ground, as St. Gregory Nyssen observes, to expect this, though it seem never so difficult and incredible, had He not promised it. "I suppose," saith he, "that an husbandman discoursing of the virtue of seeds, should not be believed by a bystander that had never been bred in the country, nor seen anything of that nature: would it not be sufficient for his satisfaction, to take but one single grain out of a heap of corn, and tell to him he

should see in that the virtue of all the rest? For he that sees one grain of wheat cast into the ground, coming up after some time a full ear, will never doubt of the fruitfulness of all the rest of the same kind. Even just so," saith he, "it seems to me a sufficient testimony of the resurrection, that the truth of other things which He foretold, cannot be denied. In them we have an experiment whereby we may judge of everything else that He hath said."

But to demand that everything should be made out by reason before we receive it, is to make us *philosophers*, not *Christians*, whose name is *believers*. And besides, the best philosophers cannot tell us how the corn I now mentioned grows up from a little seed cast into the ground, or a man from so small a beginning in his mother's womb, or anything considerable of the manner how all natural productions are performed. And, therefore, what folly it is to resolve not to be satisfied, unless we show how a dead body can be raised. It is sufficient to show that *idoneus est reficere qui facit*, as Tertullian speaks in this case. He that made it at first is able to make it again.

Let him, therefore, that believes this testimony that God hath given us eternal life in His Son Jesus, ask himself *what he thinks in his conscience is the way to this supreme felicity*. May we live here just as we wish, and yet hope hereafter to live with Christ? Or can we reasonably think to be received up to His heavenly kingdom though we mind nothing but what we get in this world? Strange that Christian people should imagine piety and virtue to be things superfluous! and take the mortifying of the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life to be nothing else but a

piece of monastical austerity and melancholic devotion!

Consider what all these witnesses say concerning the way to heaven. Do they not tell us that "narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life" (Matt. vii. 14), that we must strive to enter (Luke xiii. 24); and that "there shall not enter into it anything defiled" (Rev. xxi. 27); and that "without holiness no man shall see God"? (Heb. xii. 14).

The Father, by a voice from heaven bids us hear His Son, who says, "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). And the Word saith, "Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb; that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city" (Rev. xx. 14). Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith: "To-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iii. 7, 8). This was the language of old; and it was poured also upon the apostles that *penance and remission of sins* should be preached in our Saviour's name unto all nations (Luke xxiv. 47, 49), which is the end also of our being washed with water in His name; for "we are baptized in His death; and therefore ought to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof" (Rom. vi. 3, 11, 12). For His blood was shed, "that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works" (Tit. ii. 14). For which end also He was raised from the dead that by the eternal Spirit He might *bless us*, "that

every one may convert himself from his wickedness" (Acts iii. 26). And therefore this the apostles say and testify in the Lord, "that henceforward we walk not as also the Gentiles walk" (Ephes. iv. 17). For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification. "Therefore he that despiseth these things despiseth not man, but God; who also hath given His holy Spirit in us" (1 Thess. iv. 7, 8).

It shall be more tolerable, says our Saviour, for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment, than for those places where the Gospel of God's grace was preached. This very thing will make the fire more devouring, to think for what poor pleasures or gains they set at naught so stupendous a grace; and that withal they have lost those things for which they lost heaven. The miserable soul will continually pour itself the hottest and the most scalding thoughts of its own gross stupidity and senseless negligence. It will flame with anger and burning wrath against itself, for the frantic choice which it had made. This misery will lie frying forever, *sibique perpetuum pabulum subministrabit*, and afford to itself perpetual fuel, to keep alive the boiling rage and fierce displeasure it hath conceived against itself.

But I shall pursue it no further. I shall only add that none knows what flames the breath of the Lord will kindle. The power of His anger is inconceivable, especially when incensed by the slighting of His love. Who can describe the torments which the fire that never goes out, and the worm that never dies, when they meet together, will cause both in the souls and bodies of such contemptuous sinners?

Consider, then, I beseech you once more, what is the

wisest course for him to take who believes all this, and doth not think we have been all this time discoursing of a fiction. Is every man that reads these things resolved to become a new creature? and say as St. Paul did after he had seen our Saviour: "What shall I do, Lord?" or as the Israelites, who beheld no such sights as are set before our eyes, *all that the Lord our God speaks to us, we will hear it and do it?*

O that there were such an heart in every one of us, that we would no longer neglect such great salvation! And in all our external affairs exercise such justice, charity, thankfulness, and contented humility, that we may be able to say, if anybody ask us what we are doing, *we work for eternity.*

The hope of eternal life did not only support and uphold the spirits of the martyrs; it wonderfully refreshed and comforted them in all their afflictions. "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we also may be able to comfort them who are in any distress," etc. (2 Cor. i. 4, 7). His kingdom they knew was not of this world, even as He was not of the world; and therefore they did not expect He should give them a portion of good things here. No; He told them plainly, "in the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). Which victory of His over death and the grave encouraged them to follow Him in all their tribulations, not merely with simple comfort, but with joy. So our Saviour Himself bade them rejoice when they were reviled and persecuted for His name's sake: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven" (Matt. v. 12). And so they did as St. Paul tells us (Rom. v. 2, 3): "We glory in the hope of the glory of God;

and not only so, but we glory also in tribulations." For they had this strong consolation, as the divine writer to the Hebrews calls it: *First*, that nothing, either in this world or the other, could take away that heavenly good from them; as St. Paul testifies in that triumph of his: "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39). *Second*, as they knew they could not lose their future happiness, so they knew it to be incomparably greater than all their sufferings: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 18). And there is a *third* reason of their exceeding great joy: because their afflictions which they endured for Christ's sake would increase their glory hereafter and crown them in heaven.

Consider with what resolution, courage, and cheerfulness, they whose knowledge of heavenly things was darker than ours, received the most dreadful sufferings, even death itself, before the coming of our Saviour. The mother and her seven sons, whose story is recorded in the second book of the Maccabees (chapter vii.), in hope of a blessed resurrection, offered themselves to the sharpest torments, rather than break the Law of their Creator. It would be too long to relate the speech of the mother and those of her sons who gave an illustrious testimony of their faith in God, and have left a rare example to all posterity of constancy and patience under the greatest sufferings. The

apostle himself hath perpetuated their memory in his epistle to the Hebrews, and made it sacred to all generations; where it will stand to our great confusion, if we should not learn of those who had so great a faith, under so dark a revelation. What would not these persons have done if they had lived in our times; who were so courageous before the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that followed after? What rare souls would they not have been, especially with the example of Jesus Christ?

Let us remember the words of these *witnesses* who say that *Jesus is the Son of God,* in whom is *eternal life.* And since all these witnesses say He is in heaven, let us resolve that we will die looking up to Him, and saying: Lord, remember it is the will of the Father that we should have eternal life. *Thou* Thyself appearedst to St. Stephen, and madest him confident. Thou wilt receive our spirit also. The *Holy Ghost,* the Spirit of truth saith Thou art glorified, and wilt glorify us with Thyself. This Thou hast preached to us. This Thy Blood hath purchased for us. This is why Thou didst *rise again* to prepare for our coming to Thee. This the holy *apostles* say Thou sendest them to publish to the world. This Thou madest us believe, and wait for, and suffer for, and long to enjoy. O dearest Lord, and most merciful Saviour, who art the *true and faithful witness,* let not the price of Thy precious Blood be lost. Then I will not cease to call upon Thee; I will die with these words in my mouth, and be confident Thou wilt hear me, LORD JESUS, RECEIVE MY SPIRIT. Then confidently I hope to offer acceptable sacrifices to Thee at Thy Holy Altar, O Father, and Word, and Holy Ghost: for to Thee belongs all glory, honor, and dominion, forever and ever.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF OURS.

As the angels on the birth-night of the immortal Son of God proclaimed to the world the nativity of Jesus Christ, so they announced to the devout women of the sepulchre the joyful news of His glorious Resurrection. "You seek," said the heavenly messenger, "Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified; He is risen; He is not here" (Mark xvi. 6).

These words were spoken eighteen hundred years ago, and it is a consolation to know that Jesus Christ is the same to-day as on the morning of His resurrection, and in knowing this we are more blessed than the women to whom the angels spoke, according to our Lord's words: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed."

His humility, His birth in the manger, His sufferings and shameful death on the cross veiled His glory, but His glory is displayed in the mystery of His resurrection. His death on the cross is repaid, His labors crowned, His divinity manifested, His humility exalted, His wisdom unfolded, His religion established, His doctrines confirmed and built upon an unshaken foundation.

At this glorious event the heavens and the earth were filled with unspeakable joy and triumph, and justly resounded with canticles of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. Since Jesus Christ by forsaking the mansions of the dead and rising glorious from the tomb, demon-

strated His divinity, fulfilled the prophecies, destroyed the empire of Satan, triumphed over sin and death, and opened to mankind the gates of everlasting life: we shall rise from our graves at the end of the world, and be united to Him as our Head, because He has merited for us a right to partake of His immortality, and a title to the full possession of the true land of promise, the kingdom of heaven. "As He died for our sins, so He rose again for our justification," says St. Paul (Rom. iv. 25). His resurrection, therefore, is the confirmation of our faith, the accomplishment of our redemption, and the foundation of our hope that we shall one day rise from death to a life of immortal glory.

Two of the most important truths of Christianity are founded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ: *first*, this mystery is the basis of the Christian religion, namely, that Jesus Christ is God; *second*, it is the source of all evangelical morals, namely, that we shall rise again one day like Jesus Christ.

The greatest proof of Christ's Godhead and divinity is the resurrection. "He was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). St. Paul proves clearly our Lord's resurrection with arguments capable of convincing the most incredulous. For he knew well that mankind would never receive the austere morals of the Gospel nor embrace the incomprehensible mysteries of the Christian faith, unless they were persuaded that they should obtain in the world to come a grand recompense for their obedience. He appeared, says that great apostle, to St. Peter; then to the eleven disciples, then to James and to all the rest of the apostles, afterward to more than five hundred of the faithful assembled together. Now, if Christ be

truly risen from the dead as the evidence proved, it follows by a necessary consequence that He is truly the Son of God; His doctrine, therefore, is from heaven; the promises and menaces He makes us are certain; the punishments and recompenses He assures us are infallible, and of course we are to believe that we shall rise again with the same body and soul to receive the eternal sentence of justice or mercy. It is a point of the utmost importance for us to examine carefully, if we have truly forsaken the grave of our iniquities as Christ did forsake the grave of death, because the truth of His resurrection must serve as a mirror and model for us to discover the truth of our spiritual resurrection and to prove the sincerity of our repentance. First, Christ arose from the tomb where the Jews had buried Him. Secondly, He reappeared to His disciples in a palpable manner. Thirdly, He confirmed by sensible actions the appearance He made. It is from these circumstances we are to judge whether our spiritual resurrection and conversion be true or false.

The disciples had lost almost all hopes of seeing their divine Master again while His body remained in the tomb. *We hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel;* but He is dead, and our hopes are dead with Him (Luke xxiv.). Indeed, there is but cold comfort in a dead Saviour. Jesus had often mentioned before His death that on the third day He should rise again. The Jewish Synagogue well remembered it, and therefore applied to Pilate for a guard as if they suspected a design in the disciples of stealing away the body, and then saying that it was raised to life again. Pilate granted their request. They rejoiced to be delivered from one whom they looked upon as their most

dangerous enemy, and placing sentinels about His tomb thought themselves perfectly secured. But He who dwells in the highest heavens despised their empty schemes, and turned their malicious designs to their confusion, even into the very means of manifesting the truth which they strove to conceal.

For, on the third day, early in the morning, the soul of our blessed Saviour, which, during the time of its separation, had been comforting souls in limbo, came to the sepulchre, and reunited itself with His sacred body and He rose by His own divine power from the dead. In that awful moment the earth was shaken to its very foundation, the dead arose from their graves, an angel in a raiment of glory descends from heaven, throws open the grave, and prostrates the guards on the ground. "You seek," said the angel to the women, "Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified; He is risen; He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him" (Mark xvi. 6). The emptiness of the grave proved that He was risen. This is a clear proof that Christ rose from the bowels of the earth, and came to life by His own power and virtue. His divinity was no longer eclipsed, but was displayed and manifested by the re-union of His soul and body, nor was His power any longer restrained, but it was signalized by His victory over death.

On the certainty of Christ's resurrection depend all hopes of our own. And in the first place, what is there in it that need shock our reason? It was a wonderful event; but is not nature full of wonderful events? When we seriously weigh the matter, is it less strange that a grain of corn thrown into the ground should die, and rise again with new vegetation, than that a human

body, in the same circumstances, should assume new life? The commonness of the former makes it familiar to us, but not in any degree less unaccountable—are we at all more acquainted with the manner in which grain germinates, than the manner in which a body is raised from the dead? The same power that can effect the one may effect the other also. But analogy, though it may tend to convince, is not truth. Let us proceed to the matter of fact. That the body was dead, and safely lodged in the tomb and afterward conveyed out of it was agreed on, both by those who opposed, and by those who favored the resurrection. The disciples tell us in a very plain and simple manner that the body was gone,—they were surprised at the event, notwithstanding their Master had Himself foretold it. They found afterward, to their great astonishment, that their Master was again alive, and they were several times with Him; they appealed for the truth of what they said to great numbers, who, as well as themselves, had seen Him after His resurrection. The chief priests, on the other side, declared the whole to be a forgery, asserting that the plain matter of fact was, the disciples came by night, and stole the body away, while the soldiers slept. Such a tale, unsupported by evidence, would be listened to in no court of justice. It has not even the air of probability. Can it be supposed that the disciples, who had fled with terror when they might have rescued their Master's life, would venture in the face of an armed guard to carry off His dead body? Or is it probable they found the whole guard asleep, when we know that the vigilance of sentinels is secured by the strictest discipline? If the chief priests had any proof, why did they not produce it? Why

were not the disciples taken up and examined upon the fact? They never absconded. Why were they not judicially tried? Why was not the trial made public? and why were not authentic memorials of the fraud handed down to posterity, as authentic memorials were of the fact recorded at the very time and place where it happened? Christianity never wanted enemies to propagate its disparagement; but nothing of this kind was done; no proof was attempted, except, indeed, the testimony of men asleep. The disciples were never questioned upon the fact, and the chief priests rested satisfied with spreading an inconsistent rumor among the people, impressed merely by their own authority.

Historical questions are decided upon the authority of honest men. The records of Pontius Pilate sent to the Emperor Tiberius, evince the truth of the resurrection, in which he relates the death and resurrection of Christ, which were recorded at Rome, as usual among other provincial matters. This intelligence made so great an impression upon the Emperor, that he referred it to the Senate, whether Jesus Christ of Judea should not be taken into the number of the Roman gods. Our belief of this fact is chiefly founded upon the testimony of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, two learned heathen in the age succeeding Christ, who became Christians from this very evidence, among others, in favor of Christianity. In their apologies to the Senate of Rome, they both appeal to these records of Pontius Pilate, as then generally known, which we cannot conceive such able apologists would have done, if no such records had existed.

Upon the whole, then, we may affirm boldly that this great event of the resurrection of Christ is founded

upon evidence equal to the importance of it. If we expect still more, our answer is upon record: "If ye believe not Moses and the prophets," God's ordinary means of salvation, "neither will ye be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." There must be bounds in all human evidences, and he who will believe nothing, unless he has every possible mode of proof, must be an infidel in almost every transaction of life.

He appeared in His exalted state to His disciples. He showed that He had a real human body; they handled Him, and saw Him come and go when the doors were shut, thus manifesting Himself as perfect God and perfect man. He ascended to His eternal kingdom, there to remain till the last day, "wonderful counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace" (Isaias ix. 6).

Jesus Christ is our hope. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (St. Peter i. 3). For the same divine power which resuscitated Jesus Christ from the dead (2 Cor. iv.), will also with Jesus resuscitate us to a participation of that incorruptible, of that unfading and everlasting inheritance which is reserved for us in heaven. Such is the hope which all true Christian believers possess in Christ Jesus our Lord. In this hope the Arian has no share, because, by denying the divinity of Jesus Christ, he rejects the foundation on which this hope is built.

To this hope the Unitarian renounces his title; because by disbelieving a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine nature he overthrows in his own mind the whole Christian system, annihilates the work of

man's redemption, discards the incarnation, the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Vain then in his opinion must be the preaching of the Gospel, and groundless the hope of any future recompense. To this hope the Materialist has no pretensions, when putting himself down upon a level with the brute creation, he degrades the dignity of an immortal soul, and meanly fancies it doomed to perish with his body in the same grave. To this hope, in fine, the Deist lays no claim when doubting of all that reason cannot fathom, he affects to reduce the standard of religion to the airy conceits of his own understanding. Void of the principles of faith, he forms no other idea of divine things than what imperfect reason under the influence of flesh and blood suggests. For the sensual man, says St. Paul (1 Cor. ii.), has no conception of the things that are of the Spirit of God; he neither relishes nor understands them. Full of that earthly wisdom which is foolishness in the sight of God, he disregards the truth of revelation; too proud to stoop to the simplicity of the Gospel, too self-sufficient to submit his judgment to the principles of faith, and too skilled in false philosophy to adopt the precepts or practice of religion, he shines for a time in the delusive sphere of infidelity, till like a baleful meteor he vanishes out of sight never to shine again.

David foretold that "His soul should not be left in hell," nor "the Holy One of God see corruption" (Ps. xv. 10). "The Lord hath prepared His holy arm in the sight of all the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isaias lii. 10). Hence Christ affirms His resurrection from the sacred Scripture: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved

Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day" (Luke xxiv. 46). The "Holy Son Jesus" (Acts iv. 27). Here we see His resurrection harmonizes with the history of His birth conceived by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Son was immortal even in His mortal nature, although liable to death, yet death could not hold possession. Death might overpower, but it could not keep possession; "it had no dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9). *He was "the living among the dead."* Created in God's image, He was the second Adam, and more than Adam in His sacred nature, which beamed through His tabernacle of flesh. "The first man *was* of earth earthly; the second man was the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. xv. 47). Christ was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (Ibid. xv. 4).

The justice of God demanded that Christ should rise again and enter the glory of the Father. 1. For since the Son made full satisfaction, it was just that He should not be retained longer as one guilty of capital punishment. 2. The Prince of Life could not remain a long time in the chains of death, nor could the divine nature suffer that the body, the temple of the Divinity, should remain in the kingdom of death. 3. It was necessary that Christ should die to acquire salvation; it was also necessary that He should apply it. 4. This resurrection was necessary for the confirmation of our faith, and also for the foundation of the Church; for "If Christ be not risen again," says the apostle, "then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain, for you are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 14, 17). Hence St. Augustine says: "It is of little moment to believe that Christ died. This the Pagans, Jews, and all the

wicked believe. In a word, all believe that Christ died; but that He rose again from the dead is the belief of Christians. To believe that He rose again, this we deem of great importance" (Augustine in Ps. cxx. 4). "He humbled Himself," says the same apostle, "becoming obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross; for which cause God also hath *exalted Him*" (Philip. ii. 8, 9).

Eternal thanks to God who has given us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord, for His resurrection has completed the mystery of our salvation and redemption. We were *purchased* by *His Redemption; His Resurrection sealed the title* and conveyed *it* to us, and *our justification* entitles us to heaven.

The incredulous Jews labored to obscure the prophecies concerning the divine Saviour: "Prophesy not for us those things that are right, but prophesy errors for us" (Isa. xxx. 10). The prophecy of Job is the most remarkable description of the resurrection of Christ. He speaks like an apostle rather than a prophet. He foretells Christ's resurrection and prophesies his own: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; this my hope is laid up in my bosom" (Job xix. 25, 26, 27).

Here Job foresees and foretells the Resurrection of Christ. He tells us that Christ, who by His death redeemed him, has again obtained an endless *life;* that after His fall by death He is recovered and got up again, stands and shall stand last upon the earth. He prophesies his own resurrection; he knew there was

hope in his death, that he should be raised from the grave of corruption to an everlasting life of happiness. This *text* of Scripture demands our special attention on account of its clearness and its antiquity. There is not a more full, more expressive description of the Resurrection in all the Scripture than this of Job's. *O virum ante Evangelium, Evangelicum!* With *Thomas*, he puts his hand into Christ's side, beholds and embraces Him, and then his faith worships and adores his *Redeemer; my Lord and my God.* There is another excellency that commends it—the date of antiquity. It is believed by many that Moses was the penman of this *book.* Job lived in Moses' time, or before him. St. Chrysostom reckons him the fourth from Esau. So timely a prophecy of our Saviour's death and resurrection is a rare monument. St. Peter tells us that Christ's resurrection was the *purchase of our inheritance.* Now in matters of inheritance, the ancient deeds and conveyances are always the best. Here is a court-roll written by Moses, the first penman that God ever employed; and here is a copy taken up by Job, one of the primitive saints, and by him conveyed to the Church forever. It was a matter of debasement to St. Paul that he had seen Christ last of all: "Last of all He was seen also by me, as one born out of due time" (1 Cor. xv. 8).

On the contrary it was a great dignity to Job that he was first born of faith; first of all He was seen by him. His faith has the birthright of all the saints in the Old Testament. It was the high praise of those good women in the Gospel that they rose early to go to the sepulchre. Job's faith outstrips them all, and carries him to the grave of Christ; he believes and confesses His resurrection. The saving object of Job's faith was

the belief in Christ as *Redeemer*, *Raiser*, and *Judge*. These were the stays and pillars of his hope.

There are many remarkable types of the Resurrection in the sacred Scripture: Naaman's corrupt flesh restored *as the flesh of a young child*, all whole and sound again. The widow of Sareptha's son raised from the dead; Jonas devoured by the whale and after three days restored again.

This mystery of the resurrection Christ Himself preached to the Gentiles: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24, 25).

Jesus in His divine economy saw the necessity of reserving the principal proof of His divinity until the resurrection, for in this great miracle God the Father proved that His divine Son was God and man at the same time: man, inasmuch as He was raised from death to life; and God, inasmuch as He raised Himself from death to life.

When the Jews asked from Him a sign by what authority He had done those things: "No other sign than that typified by the prophet Jonas" (Matt. xii.). "What sign dost thou show unto us, seeing thou dost these things?" "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 18, 19). When the disciples had discovered the glory of His Transfiguration: "Tell the vision to no man till the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (Matt. xvii. 9). Because, as St. Chrysostom says: "The resurrection was to be the sign of His divine filiation and the seal and finishing proof of all His other miracles." Our Saviour said: "I am equal to my Father, God as He is," and to make good what I advance, "I will rise from the dead the third day after my death."

We believe that Christ *rose the third day;* then, again, we believe that we shall rise also at the *resurrection of the body.* Man may yield to the truth of Christ's resurrection and doubt and question that of ours. 1. Christ was God; He could raise up Himself. *He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it up again.* 2. Though Christ were dead, and His soul severed from His body, yet His Godhead and divinity were still united to it. His dead body was the body of the Son of God. Still supported and sustained by the Deity, so being united to the fountain of life, it is more conceivable that He should revive and live again. 3. Christ's body in the grave saw no corruption or putrefaction, no incineration, turned not into dust and ashes, lay but three days in the grave and revived. Job's body and ours shall be eaten by worms, turned to corruption, rotted in the grave many hundred years. It is easier then to conceive Christ's Resurrection than to believe ours. Yet "*I know,*" said Job, "*Christ* is risen, and *I know* I shall rise again." Why? For he is sure that Christ is risen. Our resurrection is founded and built upon Christ's Resurrection. *He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies* (Rom. viii.).

We may strongly argue from Christ's resurrection to the possibility of ours. If God raised Him, the same power can raise us also. *Tota ratio facti,* is *potentia facientis.* If Christ broke through the iron gate, clove the rocks, then it is possible for us to rise now that the gate of Life is set open to us, the rock and grave-stone rolled away and removed for us. Christ's Resurrection is the exemplary cause of our resurrection. In the language of St. Paul, "we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus

Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 20, 21).

"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. vii. 11). Our infirmities have a malignant power to make us subject to the law of death. Their very existence in a Christian is the seed and original of mortality. Though sin be pardoned by the death of Christ, though the dominion and power of it be broken and subdued by the Spirit of Christ, yet as long as it remains in us in the least and lowest degree, it makes us subject to the power of death. This subjection to death is not total, but half a death, the death of the body only, but the soul has escaped free from the snares of death. *The body indeed is dead* (that is, subject to death) *because of sin, but the spirit liveth because of Justification* (v. 10). Our chief and best part is put in a state of spiritual and glorious immortality. *Fear not that which kills the body, and can do no more.* The death of the body is not total nor is it perpetual. "The righteous shall have dominion over death in the morning." Our bodies in the holds of death are *prisoners of hope.* Death shall be swallowed up and abolished; the power and Spirit of God shall free these mortal bodies, bring us like *St. Peter* asleep out of the dungeon, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you."

Our resurrection is promised on the condition that He who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in us. He hath redeemed, He hath called, He hath mortified and sanctified, therefore He will raise us, and at last glorify us.

We do not gratuitously affirm, I shall be saved; my body shall be raised; but it is lawfully concluded on warrantable grounds: If I be justified; if the Spirit of God dwell in me, these are evidences, arguments, and pledges of my resurrection. Our resurrection is absolute and necessary, *exigentia justitiæ;* "it is appointed for all men to come to judgment" (Heb. ix.). The resurrection shall bring the prisoners from the jail to the bar according to God's justice; yet the resurrection to life is capable of limitation and condition: "If by any means I may attain to the resurrection which is from the dead" (St. Paul, Phil. iii. 11). That there shall be an assizes and jail delivering, is settled by law, but how the prisoners shall speed, whether to advancement or execution, there is a hazard in that.

We cannot immediately leap into heaven through the merits of Jesus Christ; there are prerequisites, conditions for our actual fruition. *I strive if by any means I may attain to the resurrection.* Our resurrection is a fundamental article of our faith, and yet as to its effect, limited with an *if*. Let it be ever so certain in itself, yet without the desire of sanctity, resurrection to life is not certain to us. "Without holiness no man shall see God" (Heb. xii. 14).

"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you." The Holy Ghost is both the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, proceeds alike from both of them. The denial of this truth by the Greek Church caused that great schism between the Eastern and Western churches. The Christian faith acknowledges the Holy Ghost to be the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son. Sometimes He is called the Spirit of the Father (John xv. 26): "He is

called the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father." The same Spirit is called *the promise of the Father*.

Again, sometimes He is called the Spirit of the Son (Rom. viii. 9). "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." "God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Gal. iv. 6). As the Spirit is *the promise of the Father*, so likewise He is *the promise of the Son* (John xvi.). He promised to send them the *Holy Ghost, the Comforter*. This procession from the Son was aptly represented by that outward sign and ceremony which Christ used in giving the *Holy Ghost* (John xx. 22): "He breathed on them, and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Breathing is from within, it showed the Spirit proceeded from Him. The apostles gave the Holy Ghost, but not *spirando*, it proceeded not from them. Christ gave it by authority, they ministerially, St. Paul expresses it (Gal. iii.).

The Holy Ghost then being the Spirit of the Son, as well as of the Father, why then is He called the Spirit of the Father? 1. Because the Father is the fountain and origin of Deity, and does communicate it both to the Son and to the Spirit. Hence divines compare the Father to the fountain from whence the water springs; the Son to the river and stream that flows from this fountain; the *Holy Ghost*, to the pool or sea into which both fountain and river do flow and run. All one in substance, yet distinctly apprehended by these resemblances. The *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* joined in the great work of our salvation. As in our creation: *Let us make;* so in the resurrection, the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the grace of the Holy

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Ghost, all concurred in this work. Thus, "for by Him we have access both in one Spirit to the Father" (Ephes. ii. 18). The Son commends us, the Spirit conducts us, and the Father receives us.

The resurrection is ascribed to the three divine Persons: 1. "Him God raised up the third day" (Acts x. 40). 2. "He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it up again" (John x. 18). Christ is the author of His own resurrection; His divinity was inseparably joined to His humanity, united not only to His living, but also to His dead body; and by virtue of that union He raised Himself. As the sun sets and rises by its own motion. 3. The Holy Ghost raised up Christ; "He was put to death in the flesh, but he was quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18). So then all concur; but it is especially attributed to the Father for divers reasons. The Father is said to have raised Christ from the dead, because the Father is in a special manner the fountain of *life*, as the Son is made known by the attribute of *wisdom*. The Holy Ghost by the attribute *love;* so the Father is represented by the attribute of *life*. Christ calls Him *the living Father* (John vi. 58). And St. Peter confessed that glorious title: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The same Spirit of God is communicable to us, the same arm of power may be reached out to us. He will employ the same power for us which He did for Christ (Ephes. i. 19).

The Holy Ghost dwells in us by faith in a mystical manner. Infidelity excludes Him. Faith receives and entertains Him; by charity He dwells in us. "God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 6).

Our bodies are *the temples of the Holy Ghost*. Thus St. Paul tells us (1 Cor. vi. 19): "You are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own." He that shall destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy. The Fathers prove that the Holy Ghost is a true substance because He hath a temple. None but God possess a temple. There a man dwells, where He resides and abides constantly. So then the Spirit dwells in a Christian; that is, He is constantly fixed in him, sets up his rest, makes him His mansion. "Here will I dwell, for I have chosen it" (Ps. cxxxi. 14). Therefore we must "not grieve the Holy Spirit of God" (Ephes. iv. 30), much less resist Him (Acts vii. 51), least of all despise Him (Heb. x.). Violence to a temple of God is counted sacrilege. The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Sanctification is a necessary requisite to a glorious resurrection. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii.).

The expectation of future glory must be founded upon present grace. *Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption* (Ps. xv. 10). "Everlasting life is called the fruit of holiness" (Rom. vi. 22). "He that soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 8). *Sementis hodie et cras messis*, says St. Chrysostom. This life is the seed-time; the next life is the harvest. If there be no seed-time of grace, never expect any harvest of glory. "We who have the first-fruits of the Spirit waiting for the redemption of our body" (Rom. vi. 23).

That hand that created us shall again raise and restore us. *Mine own I will bring back again* (Ps.) Shall man that is dead . . . . live again? observed Job (xiv. 14, 15). Yes, yes, "Thou shalt call me, and I will answer thee: to the work of thy hands thou shalt reach out thy right hand."

There are many miraculous works in Scripture that did prefigure our resurrection, but none like this of raising Christ. Henoch's translation, that he saw not death (Gen. v. 24); Elias' rapture and assumption in a fiery chariot; his exemption from death, his exaltation was a type of our resurrection. Aaron's rod, a dry, dead piece of wood made to bud and flourish, argues a possibility that we shall revive. The garments of the Israelites for forty years, though used and worn, yet decayed not. He who can preserve our garments from wearing can preserve our bodies from perishing. The children cast into a fiery furnace, yet preserved; Jonas cast up again when the whale had swallowed him; the prophet slain by the lion, but yet not devoured by him. All these are hopeful assurances and sweet resemblances and arguments of our rising again, but none like this: *He that raised Christ from the dead, shall raise us also.*

St. Paul argues strongly from Christ's resurrection the possibility of ours: "If Christ be risen again, how say some that there is no resurrection?" Death is vanquished by Christ's resurrection. When the prison door is open it is easy to escape. If the head be risen, the members must follow after. *Christus not potest habere membra damnata.* We have seen the author, what is the action? He shall quicken our mortal bodies, why not our dead bodies? To be raised from *mortality* is a

great deal more than to be raised from *death*. The resurrection frees us from the possibility of death—*death shall have no dominion over us*, not only "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv. 54), but also "mortality shall be swallowed by life" (2 Cor. v. 4).

This resurrection of ours exceeds that of Lazarus and the others mentioned in Scripture. Nay, our resurrection sets us in an immortality beyond that of Adam. He had an immortality, but not like this of ours. As was his liberty from sin, so was his immortality and freedom from death. He might not have sinned—that was his liberty; he might not have died—that was his immortality. But the liberty from sin in heaven is *non posse peccare*; there they cannot sin. So in our immortality, *non posse mori*, that we cannot die; it takes away the possibility of death.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away" (Rev. xxi. 4).

The Spirit of God dwelling in us is a proof of our resurrection, because it is the *vinculum unionis*, the Spirit is the bond of our union and conjunction with Christ. By it we are incorporated with His holy body and made members of it. Now, if our head rise, all the members must rise with it. If the head be in heaven, the members shall not forever perish in the grave. Christ will part with none of His members: "Father, I will that where I am they shall be also"; "because I live, you shall live also" (John xiv. 19).

The wicked have no share in Christ's resurrection, nevertheless they shall be raised *ex officio judicis*, not

beneficio mediatoris. They do not bear the image of the second Adam; they are not planted into the similitude of His death or resurrection. He is the resurrection and life to them that believe in Him (John xi.). The resurrection of the wicked is not the fruit of the Gospel, but rather the sequel of a law. If our bodies are the dwellings of Satan, there remains nothing but a sink of sin, a dunghill of corruption and rendezvous of unclean spirits. All the rent he pays thee will be ruin and destruction. But if the Spirit of God dwells in us, the same power that raised up Jesus from the dead shall raise also our mortal bodies to an immortal life of glory.

Wherefore, to conclude this subject: *Since it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment*, what matters it whether those particles of which our bodies are composed shall be scattered to the four winds of the heavens, since He who hushed the roaring thunder, calmed the raging billows, and gave vitality to the cold ear of death—in a word, He who gave us our *life*, our *light*, and our *being*, can bring our bodies together again, atom to its atom, bone to its fellow bone, and make them stand up vivified and glorified on the very grave where they lay. They may bury His saints in the ocean, or burn them and scatter their ashes on the winds as an old persecutor did, to prevent Christ from finding them; but Jesus never sleeps, and the honored dust of His people is more precious to Him than those beautiful worlds that He guides far above us in the blue skies.

O glorious Jesus! the Saviour and Judge of mankind, before whose just tribunal we must all appear, but when, we know not, and there give account of our

works, and be rewarded according to them, assist me with Thy grace, that, persevering to the end, I may die in Thy love, and enter the kingdom of Thy Father, to praise Him, world without end.

"Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 57).

"I WILL GO AND SEE THIS GREAT SIGHT."

(Exod. iii. 3.)

While Moses fed the flock of Jethro on the mount of God, behold a wonderful object was exhibited to his view. It was a bush all on fire, which nevertheless was not consumed by the flames. What could be the cause that preserved it from consumption? How was it that this destructive element, whose violence consumes all that comes within its reach, spared this miraculous bush? Who would not have said as Moses did under such circumstances: "I will go and see this great sight"?

In this chapter I shall call the attention and devotion of my readers to an extraordinary prodigy in which is manifested one of the greatest miracles of the Almighty. It is a virgin destined by the counsels of Heaven to become the Mother of God, a virgin free from the least stain of the guilt of Adam.

When we view retrospectively the history of the Jewish people, as well as the history of our Blessed Lord; when we see the cherished prophets, patriarchs, and doctors chosen from among thousands to be the instruments of divine providence; when we see Moses, a man of God, in the midst of roaring thunder, surrounded by those tremendous flashes of lightning that lit up the dismal sky, ascending the craggy mountain of Sinai, and receiving from the hands of God that grand, sublime, moral, and ever undying code of "The Ten Commandments"; when we see the apostles, those val-

iant champions of Christianity, erecting the standard of the Cross, floating the banner of Calvary triumphantly over the plains of Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome; but notwithstanding those heaven-given faculties, by which they wrought so many wonderful miracles, nevertheless not one of them could claim exemption from the sin of our *first parents*. The Virgin Mary alone was free from all sin; her soul, from the very moment of her conception, was sanctified and replenished with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in order that she might become a pure tabernacle, worthy of the dignity of the Mother of Jesus, who made her an impassable barrier that stopped the progress of the infernal enemy.

God made man to His own image and likeness. He gave him a precept of easy observance. This was necessary to show him his dependence on the power which had called him into existence from a state of nonentity. The law given to man was: "That he should not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and of evil" (Gen. iii.); the threat of the penalty of death being added. But man violated the divine behests, and humanity in Adam was doomed to perpetual exile from its celestial home. The fountain of the misery which abounds through the human race, is the sin of the first man, from whom the poisonous draft of original sin was transmitted. Kings and subjects, the great and the small, rich and poor, were stricken by a common malediction. Therefore does the apostle say that we are all born children of wrath. "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Therefore did the prophets of old say: "A heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their

coming out of their mothers' womb until the day of their burial into the mother of all" (Ecclesiasticus xl. 1). "Man born of woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries" (Job xiv. 1). "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth" (Gen. viii. 21). "For, behold, I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me" (Ps. l. 7). Let us see St. Paul's clearest confessions, so that we may be able to embrace all in a few words: "I am carnal, sold under sin, for the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do; I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members" (Rom. vii. 14, 19, 23). From that corrupt concupiscence, which is not of the Father, are born contentions and murders, and immoderate desires, and every evil that is introduced into the world (1 John ii. 16). From the above testimony one would naturally conclude that all were born in sin; and, in fact, St. Paul, speaking of this universal sentence of reprobation against the human race, seems not to admit of the least exception. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world," etc. The forcible language of the apostle, based upon divine authority, and corroborated by the testimony of inspired men, and our own corrupt nature, prove that we have fallen away from the happy state in which Adam was placed. By his unfortunate prevarication, the gates of heaven were closed. No act on the part of man could extricate mankind from the wrath of God; no soul could ever enter through the sacred portals of heaven except though the Blood of the Incarnate Word. But the counsels of heaven sat, the Divine Word offered Him-

self to become incarnate in order to appease His Father's wrath, to reconcile man to God; to regenerate, to sanctify, to redeem. A thousand oracles proclaim His advent; patriarchs have sighed for and prophets have proclaimed His coming. The fulness of time has come; a virgin is born from the root of Jesse; an angel speaks the message of God; consent is given and the Word is made flesh in the womb of Mary immaculate. *Vadam et videbo visionem hanc magnam.* I will go and see this great vision: A virgin destined by the counsels of heaven to become the Immaculate Mother of the Son of God; a virgin over whom the breath of sin never passed. God, in His divine economy, saw the necessity of creating a pure humanity worthy of the dignity of the divine Person. God in His divine justice could not suffer His well-beloved Son to assume a corrupt humanity, because it was repugnant to a divine Person to be united to sin-stained flesh and blood; hence the necessity of selecting a pure and spotless virgin from whom the Son of God should receive His Humanity. Whatsoever substance of His body He received from the blessed Virgin descending from Adam, nevertheless He did not receive it of a carnal mixture like other men, but of the virtue of the Holy Ghost, who disposed of that substance, removing from it even what only might have the appearance of sin: "For it was fitting that we should have such a High-Priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26).

But if the Almighty God had taken that nature from one who bore in her own blood the personal taint of the universal sin, we must conclude that He thereby would have compromised His own infinite holiness; and therefore it was necessary that coming to redeem a

sinful race, the individual of that race from which He took His most sacred humanity should be perfectly pure and immaculate. God never yet called any creature to any dignity or to any office without bestowing upon that creature graces adequately proportionate to the duties which He imposed upon him. Hence it is that the prophet Jeremias was sanctified in his mother's womb before he was born, and that the infant prophet came into this world without the slightest taint of sin. Read the words of Scripture: "The word of the Lord came to me, saying: Before I formed thee in thy mother's womb I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and made thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremias i. 4, 5). So in like manner, when God created John the Baptist, who was not only to proclaim the coming of God, but to point out God amongst men in the person of Jesus Christ, He sanctified him in his mother's womb, and John the Baptist was born without sin. If Almighty God sanctifies a man before his birth, anticipating the ordinary way of regeneration, as in the case of Jeremias and John the Baptist, simply because that man was called to the office of proclaiming the Word, surely there must have been some distinctive sanctity, some especial grace in reserve for the Virgin Mary, as her office transcends theirs as far as the heavens transcend the earth. Jeremias had but to announce the word of God revealed to him. Mary was to bring forth the Word of God incarnate in her immaculate womb. John the Baptist was to point Him out and say: "Behold the Lamb of God." Mary was to hold Him in her arms and say to the world: "This Lamb of God, who is to save all mankind, is my son." And therefore it is

that as her office exceeded that of prophet, preacher, and precursor, so God reserved her alone amongst all that He created upon this earth that she should be conceived as well as born without sin, that that stream of sin which touched us all, and in its touch defiled us, should never defile the blood of Mary, who furnished to Jesus Christ the blood in which He washed away the world's sin. Therefore the Almighty for this took thought and forethought from eternity. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything, from the beginning"; that is to say, in the eternal counsels of God, Mary arose in all splendor, sanctity, and purity, because in her was to be accomplished the mystery of mysteries, the mystery that was hidden from ages with Christ in God, namely, the Incarnation of the Eternal Word.

God tells us in the Scripture expressly, that although all men were born in sin, yet there were a few who were exempted from that general rule because they were allowed to approach so near God. The woman who approached Him nearest of all the daughters of the earth, who came nearer to God than all His angels in heaven were allowed to approach Him, must be the only one of whom the Scripture speaks when it says: "My beloved is one and only one, and she is all fair, and there is no spot nor stain in her" (Canticle of Canticles). That one was the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom God destined from all eternity to be the spotless daughter of God the Father, the faithful spouse of the Holy Ghost, while Jesus in all His glory is still flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone, calls her His own sweet and loving mother. Jesus is the King of heaven, Mary is the Queen. She certainly becomes next to Jesus in dig-

nity and merit, and her glory is therefore next to His in splendor and magnificence. Thus did the apostle (St. John) behold her as she shone forth in the eternal counsels of God: "A great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Who was this woman? Mark what follows, and you will know for yourself. "And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with an iron rod; and her son was to be taken up to God and to His throne" (Apoc. xii. 1–5). Who can she be but the woman that brought forth that man-child, Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

How could God the Father honor any woman more highly than by choosing her from all eternity to become the mother of His only begotten Son? This the Bible teaches us He did. He decreed that Mary should be the fortunate woman of whose flesh His own Word would take His flesh and become the Emmanuel, the God with us. She was truly the chosen one of heaven, among thousands and thousands of millions. Hence it stands written at the very head of the book: "I will put enmities between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (Gen. iii. 15). The woman here alluded to is no other than Mary, who, by giving birth to the Saviour, crushed the head of the serpent which had seduced Eve and brought ruin on our race. Hence He continues to honor her throughout the ages that precede the accomplishment of the great event. All prophets who prophesy of the Messiah, either explicitly or implicitly, prophesy of Mary. Read attentively the prophet Isaias predicting more plainly the great event to which

is attached the salvation of the world. What does this prophet see? What is that prodigy which strikes him with astonishment, and to which he calls the attention of the house of David: "Hear ye, therefore, O house of David! The Lord Himself shall give you a sign!" That sign, that prodigy which God was to give to His people is Mary: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which means God with us" (Isaias vii. 13, 14). She shall be a virgin and the mother of a God—*Ecce, virgo concipiet et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel.* But dismissing metaphors and ancient predictions, let us see if the Gospel gives us less sublime notions of this Virgin. God commissions the angel Gabriel to announce the great mystery of man's redemption to the Virgin Mary, and to inform her that she is the instrument chosen by God for its accomplishment (Luke i. 26–38). The angel was astonished when he beheld her greatness, and bending in his angelic form before her, said: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." And when she trembled at his words, he assured her, saying: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus."

Mary was far from being exalted in her own thoughts at the dignity to which she had been raised, but meekly replied: *Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.* She still considered herself nothing better than the poor handmaid or servant of her God, though in truth already His mother.

"Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit

of thy womb." In these few but expressive words is comprised the most sublime and most complete panegyric that was ever spoken of a pure creature. To be sanctified in his mother's womb was the singular privilege of the Baptist; to be prevented by the early infusions of divine grace, and to shine with rich ornaments of grace, has been the privilege of saints; but to be full of grace, and to be replenished with the overflowing spring of divine grace was the prerogative of Mary. God is with all His creatures by the gift of creation and preservation; He is with all Christians by grace of adoption; He is with His more faithful servants by the special communication of His love and sanctity. But He is with Mary in a manner far above all this, else the angel had said no more than was applicable to the other elect of God, nothing which distinguished Mary from the rest of the saints. By the choice which the Son of God made of Mary to become His mother, He has honored her above all daughters of Eve; He has exalted her to a dignity the most sublime that a pure creature is capable of; to a dignity above all that is not God. This divine choice, then, is the foundation of Mary's greatness.

"The Lord is with thee." But that Immaculate Heart, purer than crystal, the home of the most perfect happiness ever enjoyed by woman, the tabernacle wherein the Lord dwells, nothing defiled can enter therein.

From the testimonies of Holy Writ, from *tradition*, the tie that binds the past, present, and future together from the primitive and constant doctrine of the Catholic Church, and from the unanimous consent of all nations who have embraced her faith, it is evinced that the second Person of the Blessed Trinity is the true and only

begotten Son of the Father; that He is consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost before all ages, that for us men and for our salvation He descended from heaven, took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was born of her in Bethlehem, and is called Jesus, and that the Virgin Mary is consequently the mother of Jesus, and thus is truly the mother of God. She is expressly styled so (Mother of Jesus) by St. John (ii. 1), the Mother of the Lord (so is she likewise styled) by St. Luke (i. 43).

Elizabeth, upon Mary's entering her house, was filled with the Holy Ghost, and in ecstasy exclaimed: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" The Lord of Elizabeth was no other than God; and that God had come to her with her cousin, who bore Him in her virginal bosom. It is true that Mary did not give His divine nature to Jesus; that He held it exclusively from His heavenly Father. But we maintain that since, at the conception of Christ, the human nature which He had from Mary became united in one and the same divine Person of the Godhead, Mary must be and is rightly styled the Mother of God. An example will illustrate to some extent the truth of this mystery. When a mother gives birth to a child, she is truly and deservedly called the mother of that child; yet she did not create the soul of that child—the soul was created by God. All she formed in her bosom was the earthly part of his compound being. So although Mary did not conceive the divine nature of the Word, yet because at the very moment she conceived, the human nature was united in one and the same divine Person

with the divine nature, she is truly called the Mother of God.

Our assailants think, no doubt, the following argument a master-stroke of logic: Mary is the mother of God. But a mother is of necessity older than her offspring. Therefore Mary is older than God. I hope our opponents are Christians, and that they believe Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. Read the 16th chapter of St. Matthew, and you will find Peter's answer to Christ's question, viz.: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Will our opponents deny that Jesus Christ had a mother? Will they deny that Mary was His mother? Jesus Christ is truly God, as most Protestants admit; and the Blessed Virgin being the mother of Jesus Christ, she is therefore properly called the Mother of God, as the holy Catholic Church has always believed and taught.

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople in the fifth century, wickedly attempted to dispute this glorious title; but the Church assembled in a general council at Ephesus, and condemned his heterodox assertion. Why, then, should it be wondered at, that Catholics of the nineteenth century should venerate the mother of Jesus, since those valiant champions of Christianity—Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Cyril—pronounced her the living and immortal temple of the Divinity? It is very remarkable that in all those shining hosts of saints who in every age adorned the Church, not one of them wrote against the belief that Mary was ever tainted with original sin. St. Ambrose prays to God in the following words: "Receive me, O God, not from the hands of Sarah, but from the hands of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, the Virgin who through grace is free

from every spot of sin" (Sermo. xxii., Ps. xviii.). Origen, speaking of the divine mother, says, she was not infected with the poisonous sting of the serpent; and St. Augustine, from the words of the angel, that Mary was altogether excepted from the wrath of the first judgment. St. Jerome says: Mary was never in darkness, but in light. Such was the teaching of those great men, who in their sublime talents seem to soar far above the scale of humanity, and such is the teaching of *three hundred and twelve millions and a half* of Christians in our own day—fifty-six millions and a half of whom belong to the Greek schismatic Church; while only forty-eight millions of Protestants oppose the above number, scarcely five millions of them agreeing amongst themselves. Thus this vast army of souls, composed of three hundred and twelve millions, firmly believe, as a dogma of faith, that Mary, like the purest morning light, which precedes the rising of the most brilliant sun, was from the first instant of her conception, free from original sin.

Notwithstanding the above testimony, our age does not lack Christian sects who hold us up to the ridicule of the world, because we honor the Blessed Virgin. Were we, as they say, to give Mary the honor due to God alone, we ought to be held up to the mockery and execration of mankind indeed; but being the disciples of the Gospel, and the children of the Church, we know to whom *supreme* and relative honor are due. We honor Mary next to our heavenly Father, because the most sacred authorities tell us that our veneration for the mother of Jesus cannot be too great, and we practice it because the most urgent duties demand it.

Our dissenters may ask the question: How can you

worship the Virgin Mary, and the saints and angels? How can you supplicate them for aid, instead of appealing directly to God and to Christ: when our Saviour has declared that there is only one Mediator between God and man—Jesus Christ? We respond to these interrogations in a few words. We believe that supreme worship and adoration of mortals belong to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We believe that the only Mediator between God and man is our Saviour, and that the angels, saints, and mortals always address Him, adore Him, worship Him, and pray to Him as such. But does this fact preclude the sinner from asking his pastor to pray to Christ for the pardon of his sins? Do not the Holy Scriptures repeatedly command us to pray for one another? And when the Protestant pastor prays to God or to Christ for pardon and a blessing for one of his flock who may be sick or weak in mind and body, he certainly does not assume to himself the office of mediator between God and man, but he acts the part of an humble suppliant imploring the Almighty in behalf of a sinful brother. The whole Christian world recognizes the propriety and utility of such prayers, and no one supposes the pastor or the Christian friend usurps any of the attributes or the prerogatives of our Divine Master. In like manner the Catholic requests his priest to pray for him. But he does not stop here, he even asks the mother of Jesus to pray for him. If the prayers of a clergyman now on earth are acceptable before God, a thousand times more acceptable are the prayers of Mary, the Queen of heaven, "Clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

Again, it will be readily allowed, that nothing can

be more beautiful than the characters of the women of the Old Testament, as described by the ministers of those Christian sects. They discourse eloquently on Rachel, Rebecca, Ann, the mother of Samuel; Miriam, the sister of Moses; Ruth, Esther, and Judith; Elizabeth, Anna the Prophetess; Mary Magdalen, Martha, can win their admiration and rouse their souls to a sacred enthusiasm; but when there is a question of Mary, the mother of their Saviour, their courage and their eloquence fail them, and their heart grows faint, lest every sound of praise in honor of Mary be a reflection cast upon her Son. The audience share the scruples of the speaker. They are thrilled with horror when from the pulpit or platform they hear her name. What minister would dare salute her as Gabriel did: "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." His hearers would deem him a papist or a madman if he attempted it. And yet these men boast of pure Christianity, and charge the Roman Catholic Church with Mariolatry, as if the archangel Gabriel, as if the inspired Elizabeth, as if the Holy Ghost, as if God Himself were abhorred and detested worshippers of Mary. Who does not see the absurdity of such hypocrisy?

Dr. A. Clarke, the great armory of Protestants, designates those who hold the Catholic belief as "the most stupid of mortals" (2d ed., Lond., 1814, p. 51). This is not very complimentary; but when I consider how very parallel to these and such like expressions are the taunts formerly cast by Julian the Apostate on the Galileans, because they believed a mere man to be God, I own I feel not only comforted, but proud at finding

ourselves placed in a situation so similar as our ancestors in Christianity, with relation to our modern adversaries.

It has been repeatedly asserted that we ought not to show any affection or reverence for the Virgin Mother, on the blasphemous ground that our Saviour Himself was wanting in the exercise of even filial love toward her; nor yet is this the worst feature of the case, for a graver and most awful charge is made against us in consequence of our belief. We are denounced as idolaters because we pay a certain reverence to the saints of God. And yet instead of taking anything from God it is adding immensely to His glory. By thus calling on the saints to pray for us, instead of robbing Him of His honor, we serve Him in a much more noble way than in any other. We see the saints prostrated in our behalf offering their golden crowns and palms before His footstool, pouring out before Him the odors of their golden vials, which are the prayers of their brethren on earth (Rev. iv. 10, 5, 8), and interceding through the death and passion of His Son. Surely such passages as these ought to make our traducers modify their language when they speak of our doctrines. We see a strong groundwork of our belief in the Word of God, and we are completely borne out by the practice of the Church.

In the third and fourth centuries we have the testimony of several Fathers; but I will select only two. Origen says: "Let Mary then be honored; but the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be adored." "Let no one adore Mary" (St. Epiphanius reproving the errors of Collyridian heretics).

Every Catholic, even the most ignorant, is carefully

instructed by his priest that he must worship God alone; that he must rely upon Him for mercy and pardon; but nevertheless also that we are justified in honoring the memory of the just, according to the sacred Scriptures, wherein the Lord commands us to honor the memory of the just, and praise them in the assembly of the faithful (Ecclesiasticus). "Honor to whom honor is due," says St. Paul (Rom. xiii. 7).

Now, if honor is due to one who has liberated his country from the hands of his enemy, for example, Washington, that valiant champion of freedom, who rescued his country from the hands of despotism, tyranny, and corruption. Who would not venerate the name of Washington, leaving his blood-stained footprints on the congealed waters of the Delaware in order to establish for every child of his country a liberty which I trust in Providence shall never be destroyed. Every son of freedom would kiss those bloody footmarks, would love and venerate that immortal hero! Now, if such praises are lavished upon man, why then rob Mary of hers, her who was the instrument in the hands of Providence in liberating the human race from the trammels of death; she who gave us the price of our ransom, the Lord Jesus, Him who delivered us from sin and hell, and who triumphed over both in the flesh, which He received from her?

And now we may ask, Is there anything exaggerated, unnatural or repugnant to God's Word in the view which we have taken of the Blessed Virgin? We feel sure there is not. We may further ask, Did the apostles in their preaching pass her over in silence? Certainly not. When the Twelve Apostles assembled together in order to form the grandest document of Christianity, the

Apostles' *Creed*, is the name of Mary forgotten, her memory passed over in silence? The sublime, the masterpiece, the everlasting monument of Christianity, the *Creed*, assures no, but unites her with the Godhead.

Now, when contemplating the early scenes of the Gospel history, we find her place has been far from duly considered with reference to questions controversially agitated. It is true that the Catholic attaches importance to all recorded concerning her in the Gospel, and finds there proofs incontestable of her virtue, her dignity, her privileges, and her influence, or rather power. The Protestant, on the contrary, with the exception of a few ultra high churchmen, is prone to depress, to extenuate, to disattach importance from all that relates to her; nay, he seeks to overlook it all, as merely secondary, casual, and almost dangerous. Now, it is surely important, and it can hardly fail to be interesting, to ascertain what place is appointed to her by the Word and the Spirit of God in the twofold economy of *faith* and of *grace*.

In the earlier part of the Gospel history we look for our answer. It is clear that the historical books of the New Testament present a twofold aspect, as historical records and as inspired compositions. Their writers used every human industry and pains to record what they believed and knew to be true; and the divine Spirit superintended, guided, secured from the smallest error, and sealed the work which He Himself had suggested to the writer's mind. And no small portion of the apostles' glory consists in their having been chosen witnesses of our Blessed Lord's actions, to manifest them to the world, whence St. Paul hesitates not to say that we are God's household because we are "built

upon the foundation" (that is, the testimony) "of the apostles and prophets" (Ephesians ii. 20).

But whatever may have been the importance of the facts to which they were called to be witnesses, there was one of more importance than any of them, one which is the very groundwork of the Christian dispensation, without the certainty of which the entire system falls to pieces. This is the mystery of the Incarnation, as accomplished upon earth. To this God willed that there should be only one witness of all its holiest details and sole evidence. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand" (Matt. xviii. 16),—except the Word of words, the Incarnate Word. This must stand attested to the world forever by only one witness, and that was Mary, the ever blessed. Who could tell that Gabriel came from heaven and from the Eternal Father, brought her message? Who, that she was alarmed at his greeting? Who, that she hesitated to accept the proposed prerogative of a divine maternity at its imagined price? Who, that He manifested the fulness of the gift, and the miraculous agency by which it had to be accomplished? Who, her virginal consent, and its concurrent effect, the mystery of life, the Emmanuel in existence, a God-man in being? Only she the chosen, exclusive partaker on earth of the most hidden counsels of the Almighty.

Now, first take away her contribution to the Gospel testimony, efface her testimony to Christianity, and you find not simply a link broken, but the very fastening of the whole chain wanting; not merely a gap or a break made in the structure, but the foundation gone.

Now, here the belief in the wonders wrought in the Incarnation, of ages and of the world, rests upon one

point of testimony, a unit, a single voice, that of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Again we say, cancel her testimony, and what becomes of all other witnesses? Had she not let out the secrets of her breast, or, in higher truth, had not God's Spirit moved her, as He moved the evangelists, not to collect, indeed, but scatter; not to inquire, but to teach; had He not thus made her the Evangelist of the evangelists, and the Apostle to apostles; had not the same divine influence which overcame her first reluctance of purity prevailed over her second unwillingness, and compelled her to speak the whole tale of love which fills the holiest of histories, the Gospel would have wanted not only its tenderest and most affecting beginning, but the very root from which its loveliness and beauty spring, to circulate it all.

And let it be remarked, too, that even the principal circumstances of our Saviour's nativity and early life rest exclusively upon the same evidence. When St. Luke collected his narrative from those who had been witnesses from the beginning, Joseph was long departed, and so were Zachary and Elizabeth, as well as Simeon and Anna. She only who laid up all that happened in her mother's heart (Luke ii. 19, 51) survived, witness of the journey to Bethlehem and of the flight into Egypt, of the angelic messages which accompanied these events, and of the presentation in the temple. Who else had retained in memory the words so admirable and so important to us of Elizabeth and of Zachary; above all, that canticle of the dearest interest to the Church forever, her unfailing evening hymn, *the Magnificat*.

And so when, after forty years, the early life of our

Redeemer is inquired into, there remains one faithful and most loving witness to give proof of what ennobled, ratified, and stamped with divine evidence every action and every word of His after-life. Mary alone supplied the testimony to His miraculous conception and birth, and to the fulfilment of the prophecies in her pure virginal being.

So completely had these wonderful occurrences been concealed, so well had "the secret of the King been hidden" (Job xii. 7), that when our Lord came before the public its uncontradicted opinion pronounced Him to be Joseph's son, "being, as it was supposed, the son of Joseph" (Luke iii. 23). And the people hesitated not to say in His own country: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude, and his sisters, are they not all with us?" (Matt. xiii. 55). And again they said: "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then, saith he, I came down from heaven?" (John vi. 42). Here were valid elements of human evidence a strong foundation for historical assertion. Had any one gone into the very country and neighborhood where Jesus had lived to inquire into His early history, he would have found concurrent testimony that He was "the carpenter's son." The espousals of Mary with him would have been quoted as their enrollment in Augustus' census. Public repute, that is, the testimony of thousands, might have been powerfully alleged. And against all its authority, what have we to oppose? The simple assertion of Mary. So high, so sacred, so undoubted is her word that to the Christians of all ages it has sufficed to counterbalance every other source of

information. Surely, then, her place is the very first in the order of Gospel evidences, and so in the economy of faith.

Every prophecy which Jesus uttered, every heavenly doctrine which He preached, every miracle which He wrought, every grace which He displayed, was witnessing to her every time He called her His mother. Whatever proved to the world who He was, showed equally what she was. Every work which demonstrated Him to be the Son of God, proved her irrefragably to be the mother of God: "*Beatus venter qui te portavit, et ubera quæ suxisti*" (Luke xi. 27), was the natural expression of feeling regarding both. It was a contradiction of reason and a blasphemy against God to suppose that she was not worthy of her high dignity, her awful relationship, or rather her appointed office, in the scheme of man's redemption.

Let us then imagine the "glorious choir" of those holy men about to spread over the whole earth to preach the Gospel, and collecting together their great facts which they must proclaim as the basis of their doctrine, and to which they must bear witness, even by the shedding of their blood. There is as yet no written word of the new law, and this meeting is therefore the very first source of universal teaching.

John, and his brother, and Peter, attest the anticipation of celestial glory on Thabor. The first of these alone can recount, while others hang their heads and blush, what took place on Calvary and on its road; and the last bears witness against himself of his triple denial in the high-priest's hall. Nicodemus has a hidden treasure which he brings out in the mysterious conference that he held with Jesus; and Magdalen may be

the only one to tell the history of her forgiveness. But when each one has contributed his all, miracles, and parables, and gracious words, and wisest discourse, and splendid acts, they have but furnished materials for a history of three years of a life of three-and-thirty. Where do the remaining thirty lie hidden? Who holds their annals? Who is the rich treasurer of that golden heap of blessed words and acts divine? One, only one. She comes to pour into the bright waters that flow from the apostolic fount the virginal cruse which, queen of wise virgins, she treasures in her bosom. Yea, truly; and the lamp which *it* feeds cannot be extinguished. A few drops indeed only will she give; for by those thirty years it may be said that she mainly was intended to profit—they were *her* school of perfection. But every single drop is most precious; is as a peerless and priceless pearl. "*Oleum effusum nomen tuum*" (Cant. i. 2); the very name of Jesus; that name of blessing and salvation: Wonderful God, the Mighty (Isaias ix. 6). And such are the precious and most soothing manifestations which Mary will make for the comfort of devout souls, even to the end of the world. She will lay the very groundwork of the evangelical narrative. Whatever gratitude the Church bears toward the collectors and preservers of our first sacred records is due in a signal manner to her. Whatever of credibility, authority, and truthfulness is warranted by Christian belief to the witnesses of what constitutes the basis of faith, must be peculiarly extended to her. Nor may we doubt the justness of her title in the Church—*Regina Apostolorum.*

It is gratifying, therefore, and consoling to a Catholic to learn, even though it may not have struck him be-

fore, that the ever holy virgin mother of God holds a high, or the highest place in any relation which binds her on the one side to the merciful counsels of God, and on the other, to those for whom they are decreed.

And now let us proceed to inquire what place those early records of our Saviour's life assign to His parent in the order of grace. That she was full of grace when she was chosen by God for that high dignity, we have an angel's word (Luke i. 28). That the inpouring of all grace into the already full vessel by the incarnation itself made it overflow, who can doubt?

It is no presumption to believe that one of the most remarkable and profitable events succeeding the Incarnation was the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. Simply read, it is a touching record. Gabriel's was the first salutation of Mary, Elizabeth's the second; and in the Church both are united and fit together, and are riveted as naturally, as we are told, the chains of Peter at Jerusalem and at Rome were when brought into contact. "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!" And hence Elizabeth is the second external witness of the incarnation, receiving knowledge of that marvellous mystery from the Spirit of God. What a full and overpowering sense of its grandeur and of dignity of Mary, do not these words convey? "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? and blessed art thou who hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord" (ver. 43–45). In other words, "What have I, or what am I, that such honor should be conferred upon me?" Then how does she describe it? "That the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

She was indeed the mother of the Precursor; Mary, of her, and his, Lord. Her Son was to close the Old Testament (for "until John was the law"—Luke xvi. 16). Mary's was to give and ratify the New; John was to be the sealer of prophecy; Jesus, its fulfilment. John was the herald; Jesus, the King. Elizabeth, then, the woman "just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame" (Luke i. 6). Elizabeth, the mother of the "greatest who was born of woman" (Matt. xi. 11), given to her miraculously; Elizabeth, in fine, the inspired of the Holy Ghost, here assigns to Mary a place immeasurably superior to her own, in virtue of her prerogative as the mother of the Incarnate Word, the Saviour of the world, the only begotten Son of the Father.

May we pause to ask, with whose belief about the Blessed Virgin does the feeling of Elizabeth agree, with that of Catholics or with that of Protestants? The latter, as we are told in a most important work published, "Jesus and Mary," by the Rev. J. B. Morris (Vol. i., p. 345), considers her "a good woman." "The Lord is no more with Mary than He is with my holy wife or saintly daughter," says some Presbyterian minister. Also Bishop Jewell, in his "Defence of the Church of England" (p. 121), says: "Catholics, not without manifest blasphemy, can thus call upon the blessed virgin, the mother of Christ: Thou art the lady of angels: thou art the queen of heaven." In the Catholic system, on the contrary, no one will deny this superiority is not a matter of opinion, but one of universal belief; not a sentiment, but a doctrine. And it is assigned on the same ground as it is by Elizabeth—the incommunicable privilege of the divine maternity.

St. John was thus purged and hallowed in the womb. This was a fruit of redemption, and, in fact, its essential result. To purchase for us forgiveness of sin, to reverse the original curse, and make us once more children of God, and heirs of His kingdom, were the great objects which brought down the Word from the bosom of His Father. Not only was this purification of John before birth a fruit of Redemption, but it may be well considered the first act of our Saviour's life in application of His atonement.

Now, let us take in conjunction with this remarkable fact, another and a parallel one. We mean the performance of Christ's first miracle at Cana. From St. John's account it is evident that our Lord performed it in obedience to His mother, and even anticipated His appointed hour for her sake: "My hour is not yet come." Heedless of this protest, she feels confident that He will grant her request, and orders the servants to make preparations for the miracle (John ii. 45). Again we have the same principle acted upon. The first temporal grace, though it required a miracle, and that miracle involved departure from a predetermined plan, was for her, at her request, through her means. The wine would never have been obtained had she not interposed.

The Baptist's sanctification was his mystical baptism, an anticipation by special favor to him, of what other souls were to receive through the ordinance which he had to announce—the baptism of water and the Holy Ghost. The transmutation of Cana was the symbol and the illustration of a more wonderful change in the eucharistic wedding feast. Each of these preliminary and preparatory demonstrations of power was made

through the instrumentality of the Blessed Mary. Is this surprising? She was the *aurora consurgens*, the beautiful dawn of the glorious Sun of salvation.

If, then, there be truth in all the foregoing remarks, we come to the following conclusions: That, firstly, it pleased our Saviour to make His dear mother His instrument in the first conveyance of the highest grace, and of the first-fruit of redemption, after He came on earth. Secondly, and similarly, He made her the first cause and motive in the exercise of His beneficial miraculous powers in favor of men. Thirdly, His conduct being always a principle or rule, we may deduce that on other similar occasions He would have allowed her similar privilege or right; and, fourthly, this argument of analogy does not end with His life, but gives the Church a just ground of belief and action after both He and His mother have been reunited in heaven. So far, then, from there being any strangeness or impropriety in considering the Blessed Virgin to be an ordinary channel of grace, and that of the highest order, such a view of her position seems borne out by our Lord's conduct, interpreted by the usual rules which we apply to her. This reasoning places our Blessed Lady in the economy of grace, in the same position which we have seen her occupy in the economy of faith. She stands immediately next to her divine Son, above every other created being.

For, if we compare her power even with that of the apostles, we shall find it of a different and a superior character. They had in all fulness a double gift, the sacramental energy in its completest development, and a miraculous command over nature and its laws. The first was surely not comparable to the conveying di-

rectly saving virtue from the Son of God in her womb to the Precursor in Elizabeth's, thereby not only cleansing him from original sin, but probably arming him with immunity against actual transgression, sanctifying him for his high calling and spotless life. And who will surmise that it was a higher gift to hold the delegated power of working miracles from her Son than to have obedience owned by Him who communicated it, and to possess the acknowledged subjection of Himself and all His gifts? The meaning of these words, "And He was subject to them" (Luke ii. 51), came out to its full extent in the act which closed the hidden life of Jesus, the miracle of Cana.

From what I have remarked in this chapter, it is clear that we intrench ourselves behind the strong power of the Saviour's words and of the holy Evangelists, and calmly remain there till driven from our position. The aggression must come from the other side, and the trouble taken by its divines to prove that our interpretation concerning the mother of God is incorrect, sufficiently evinces that they are aware of our strength.

"Behold! from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name" (Luke i. 48, 49).

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